# SPIRIT POSSESSION
## AND OTHER STORIES

Shankar Narayana Dooja Poojary
(SND POOJARY)

Original Tulu
MUDDU MOODUBELLE

Karnataka Tulu Sahithya Academy
Tulu Bhavana, Urwastore, Mangaluru - 6

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# A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

Muddu Moodubelle is a reputed literary figure of the coastal Karnataka. He has been writing since 1968 and there are around thirty titles to his credit. He writes in Tulu and Kannada. His research work on the twin heroes, Kantabare and Budabare of the Mulki region has earned him high admiration. His another significant work, 'Tulu Rangabhume' (2005) is hailed as a pioneering work in the field of Tulu theatre.

'Spirit Possession and Other Stories' is the English version of his collection of Tulu stories, 'OSAYO' . The stories in the collection mirror the Tuluva way of life and deal with different aspects of Tuluva life - spirit worship, superstitions, festivals, rituals, ceremonies, village politics, loneliness, paddy cultivation, flood, and so forth. The author employs typical Tulu expressions and Tulu names.

Though S.N.D. Poojary resides in Goa, he is very much interested in Tulu culture. He has already earned a name as a devoted translator of Tulu and Kannada books of Tulu culture into English. He has authored the biographies of Bannanje Babu Amin and the scholar couple – Dr. U.P. Upadhyaya and Dr. Susheela Upadhyaya. His recent book, (2016), Mayandal Paddana is a significant contribution to the study of Tulu folklore. He has translated Koti-Cennaya by Dr. Vamana Nandavar to English which was published by Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy. 'Spirit Possession and Other Stories' is one more feather in his cap.

Mr. Poojary has done a commendable job in bringing out the English version of a collection of Tulu stories of Muddu Moodubelle. The Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy is pleased to publish it.

I extend my compliments to Muddu Moodubelle and S.N.D. Poojary, and wish them well in their future endeavours. I also thank Mr. Prasanna of 'Pavan Graphics'.

**M. Janaki Brahmavara**
President,
Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy,
Mangaluru

20th January 2017

# A NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR

Spirit Possession and Other stories is the English rendering of Osayo of MudduMoodubelle. Osayo was originally published in 1994; a new edition was brought out in 2014. The present translation is of the 2014 edition.

Most of the stories in Osayo have been published at different times or broadcast on Akashavani on different occasions.

The author employs typical Tulu expressions. Almost all the names that appear in the stories are of non-Sanskrit origin, with a Tulu flavour. The style of the author is uncomplicated and unlaboured. The stories paint the rural Tulunad.

I am grateful to MudduMoodubelle for giving me his consent to bring out an English version of his book. I thank him sincerely.

My heartfelt gratitude to Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy for publishing the book.

Miramar, Goa
15th December 2016

**SND Poojary**

# FOREWORD

Muddu Moodu Belle , a refuted Literary Figure & Broadcaster, has been Writing in since 1968 and there are around 30 titles to his creadit he writes in Tulu and Kannada. It was a thrilling experience reading Muddu Moodubelle's stories in Tulu along with their translation by Mr. S. N. D. Poojary. I am greatly indebted to both these authors for giving me an opportunity to have a close reading of them and record my impressions. Mr. Poojary's sincere efforts to bring the raw native flavour into a foreign language is indeed highly commendable. Translation among Indian regional languages is comparatively not as difficult as translation into English, whose syntactic structure is entirely different. Besides, some of the culturally specific words and expressions are untranslatable. A clever translator retains them in the original form itself and gives a foot note or end note for the better comprehension of the readers of the target language. This facilitates the mutual cultural exchange too. Mr. Poojary has, likewise, deliberately retained a number of Tulu words in his translation so that the reader may get the smell of Tulu culture.

**Dr Parvathi G. Aithal**
KUNDAPURA

# SPIRIT POSSESSION

'Have you carried five spathes (paale) of tender areca flower? And areca nuts and betel leaves in the required number? Slightly increase the brightness of the lantern.'

'Kutty, come in the front, run and remove the crossbar of the wooden gate.'

'Look here my lady, after we go, don't sleep. When we return by the midnight, dinner must be ready, have you heard?'

'Who is holding the lantern? Is it Kutty? Go little faster. Four of you carry the things meant for the guttu (manor house).'

'Ravi, carry the money carefully. Let us go now. We are already late and we will take a lot of time to negotiate the grove.'

Dogs bark.

'Hello, who is there? Call back your dogs and put them on a leash and tie them.'

Cocks they carry for the blood offering ritual, crow.

'Thimma, have you tied the legs of the cocks, haven't you? Hold them by the wings.'

'It is pitch-dark here. Kutty, remain behind for a while, stand on the border of that paddy field so that I can see in the lantern light my steps. Let them go in the front, don't walk on the paddy plants.'

'What is there on the boundary wall (agar)? A cat?'

The cat cries 'meow'.

Dadu Poojary picks up a stone; the cat runs to the other end of the wall.

They cross the paddy field and reach the road leading to the grove.

These are rainy days; it rains cats and dogs. It does not rain,it pours. There are flash floods. Rivers, canals, and rivulets are flooded. Flood water has entered houses, kitchen gardens, and cowsheds. Cattle in the shed are washed away and paddy seedlings in the fields are uprooted and carried away in the flood waters. People are devastated.

After the havoc caused by the floods, people have tried to come to terms with the tragedy. They have procured fresh paddy seeds from the cooperative society and sown the fields again and raised fresh crops. Now the crops are ready for harvesting.

Harvesting and threshing of the harvested paddy on the threshing board have been completed. There are piles of paddy in the houses of farmers and there is happiness everywhere.

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Today is the food-offering ritual (posabaara tambila) at the shrine of the village folk deity, Jumaadi. The food prepared from the first crop (Kaarti) will be offered to the deity.

There is some grumbling regarding the need for such an offering. However, the village head / village chief (gurkarlu) feels that if the offering is made it would be good for the village. Hence he has decided to organize the ritual on the day of Sankraandi(the end of a Tulu month) when the shrine of the village folk deity is opened to mark the beginning of the religious activities of the year. Today is the turn of Dadu Poojary's household to organize the ritual and then other households of the village will to organize the ritual by turns.

Dadu Poojary of the 'lower house' (tirtill) prepares to

send a headload (pude) of things needed for the ritual to the shrine of Jumaadi: oil, coconuts, tender coconuts, broiled rice (poddolu), beaten rice (bajil), jaggery, front section of banana leaves, and so on.

It is the festival time in the house of Dadu Poojary. The food-offering ritual to the village folk deity is of greater importance to his household than the Festival of Light. The members of his family, the relatives of the family by marriage, and the well-wishers of the family have gathered. The family is busy making arrangements for the festival: The male members of the family have gone to the town to bring provisions and the women of the household are busy preparing various dishes.

It is evening. When it is dark Dadu Poojary, along with his people, will go to the manor house of the village chief.

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The sacred objects (bandaara) of the folk deity (Jumaadi) are in the manor house of the village chief.

The village chief has adorned himself and is sitting on a chair. Mats have been unrolled on the veranda of the manor house. The members of the village kuudkattarrive, one by one, and they sit on the bedstead, mats, and the threshing board. In a low voice they discuss the possession ritual (darsana) scheduled for the night.

Musicians, the newly appointedpriest-impersonator (darsana paatri) of Jumaadi, Rame and the heads of the prominent households of the village, arrive. The members of the village, who have to carry the sacred objects of the folk deity, arrive from the town. They go to the town every day in the evening at a fixed time and return home late in the evening. Today, however, they have returned early.

There is a platform constructed around the foot of a coconut tree in the manor house of the village chief and water has been kept on the platform. Those who arrive from the market wash their feet and faces, and refresh themselves.

The sacred things of Jumaadi are to be carried in a procession from the house of the village head to shrine of Jumaadi. The shrine is located at a short distance from the house of the chief. There is still time for the procession to start. It is now ten o'clock in the night.

Dadu Poojarynegotiates the dense grove along with his seven - eight companions, and they carry a lantern and torches of dry coconut leaves. The grove is enveloped in darkness; nothing is visible. As they walk on the narrow mud road, they tumble over the stumps of trees and tread on thickets. They cross the river by the footbridge and arrive at the courtyard of the manor house.

Dadu Poojary offers salutations to the guttinaar (the village chief).

'Who has come? Dadu Poojary? On the coconut palm-platform there is a pot filled with water; wash and refresh yourself. Then come and sit near me. The prestige of the guttu house is more important than anything else. Let others sit on the mat,' orders the village head.

He signals the musicians to blowthe wind pipes and play the percussion instruments.

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The shrine of Jumaadi is opened. The preparation for the food-offering ritual is underway. The villagers who have come to witness the ritual are offered areca nut pieces and betel leaves to chew by the manor house.

The officiating priest (mukkaaldi) cleans the low wooden seats and the bedstead of the folk deity. The village head

directs that the sweet dish (paniyaara) be prepared; Dasu Mulya cooks the food (charva) to be offered to the folk deity; and the ritual of setting up of the suttige is over.

The war-drum (tambada) is in the house of the officiating priest. Narayana, who beats the drum, brings it carrying on his head and hangs it to the railings of the shrine of the folk deity.

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The village head pays to the musicians, the priest-impersonator, and others for the various services they have rendered at the tambila ceremony.

By that time the person who will impersonate JumaadiBanta (the assistant of the folk deity, Jumaadi), arrives.

As a part of the possession ritual, the priest impersonatorsof Jumaadi and Jumaadi Banta receive from the village chief a little of oil, an areca nut, and a sheaf of betel leaves (ennebuulya). Theyapply the oil on their persons, take bath, and adorn themselves.

The mukkaaldilights a bronze lamp in the room where the sacred objects of the folk deity are kept. He waves another lamp in front of the bedstead of the folk deity. Fireworks are burst and piped gunpowder is exploded. Musicians play the traditional music.

The officiating priest hands over a sacred object of Jumaadito each designated member of the village council. The procession of carrying the sacred objects to the shrine of Jumaadi, begins. The person carrying the gaslight goes in the front, then the musicians, the persons carrying the sacred articles of Jumaadi, the village head, the priest-impersonator of Jumaadi holding a sword (kadsale) in one

hand and a temple bell (mani) in the other hand, and the impersonator of JumaadiBanta—in that order.

The procession winds through the wet and dry fields and alleys; and reaches the shrine of Jumaadi. The ceremony of installing the sacred objects in the shrine of Jumaadi starts. Musicians play percussion instruments and blow musical wind pipes. The drummer beats loudly the war-drum. The priest-impersonator, the officiating priest, and the person holding the lighted cloth torch (jiitige) become violently possessed. In a state of trance, the officiating priest installs each sacred object on the bedstead of Jumaadi. Then he waves a lamp in front of the bedstead. Now the priest is fully possessed of Jumaadi, he cannot stand, and falls down.

Thus, the ritual of installing the sacred objects is completed.

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The preparation for the food offering ritual is over and now is the possession ritual by the priest-impersonator Rame. He seeks the consent of the village head to start the fire sacrifice. He performs the fire sacrifice and is ready for the possession ritual. The village chief offers a prayer to Jumaadi and everybody splatters rice grains and pieces of flower on the spirit medium, Rame. However, Jumaadi does not appear in the person of Rame. Rice and flower pieces are given to the devotees again and the village chief says a prayer, once again:

'O Jumaadi, the time has come to organize the food-offering ritual in your honour. You are aware that this ritual is a part of the tradition set by our ancestors. Your devotees have gathered here under the ceremonial cloth (kodiyadi) tied to the ceiling of the pandal. We fixed this day and the time for the ritual. We have now cleaned your shrine,

installed your sacred objects, offered you sandalwood paste, waved a lamp in front of you, served you the sweet dish, and offered you a ready-to-drink tender coconut. All of us in unison offer this prayer: "If there are deficiencies and shortcomings in what we have done, kindly condone them and appear in the person of the priest-impersonator and bless us presenting us the sacred sandalwood paste. This is what we pray, O Jumaadi."'

All shower rice grains and flower pieces on the priest-impersonator and he becomes possessed. In a state of trance, he roars; and the JumaadiBanta makes violent gestures and produces loud guttural sounds. The circumambulation ceremony (bali seeve) is over and the blood offering (ragtaara) is made.

Now the time has come for Jumaadi to deliver the divine judgement. Dadu Poojary is disturbed; his face has become pale and lustreless.

Nanu was the priest-impersonator of Jumaadi for the last ten years. He has just arrived and is sitting in a corner of the outer veranda of the shrine. He has worn a dhoti that reached till his knees, and adorned himself with a golden bangle on his left wrist,and wound a turban around his head. He is a well-built young man. He has got married a month ago.

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There is a rumour going around in the village regarding the alleged misdeed of Nanu.

It is said that during the floods Nanu had molested the daughter of the village head while trying to help her to cross the rivulet.

People of the village are shocked. They feel that he has ruined his life.

When the news reaches the village chief he calls a meeting of the villagers and tells them:

'I have removed Nanu as the priest-impersonator of Jumaadi, he must be excommunicated from the village, and nobody in the village should offer him food or water.'

For the villagers the village chief is the representative of the folk deity, Jumaadi.

They support the village chief,

'This wretched Nanu, see his insolence! He has a young wife and yet he has done this despicable act. His behaviour is utterly disgusting. He must be made to pay for his misdeed.'

The village head says in no uncertain terms:

'Rame is the new priest-impersonator. Nanu, are you accepting your guilt? You have done something immoral and hence you can't impersonate Jumaadi anymore.'

Nanu interjects, 'Let the folk deity decide whether I am guilty or not.'

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On the day of the posabaara tambila Jumaadi, appearing in the person of the priest-impersonator, is supposed to make some oracular pronouncement regarding the misbehaviour of Nanu and announce appropriate punishment.

Jumaadi asks Nanu to come in the front. The members of the audience turn their attention on Nanu.

He comes in the front and says,

'Before the folk deity makes the oracular pronouncement, people need to know what happened on that day. Where is Gulabi? Yes, you please come here.'

'Surprising; why she has come?' asks the village chief, scratching his head.

Gulabi is the daughter of Dadu Poojary. She rolls

beedis. She is 20 years of age. Her family has organized today's offering to Jumaadi. She has been waiting near the front door of the shrine. Close to her is another maiden Jalaja and she is the daughter of the village head.

'Standing under the sacred kodiyadi, both of you tell everything that happened on that day, don't hide anything,' says Nanu.

Gulabi genuflects in front of the shrine of Jumaadi and begins,

'All of you please listen. When there was the flood, the son of the village head, Chandra, and one more person, whom I do not know, molested me. When I shouted, the respectable Nanu came to my rescue. He kicked them; and they ran away. On the following day they circulated a new story.'

'In the same way I have to confess something,' says Jalaja. The village head is all at sea.

'When Nanu was coming to our manor house he played fun with me and I laughed. My father saw this and he reprimanded me severely. This is all that happened on that day and nothing else had happened,' she says.

Jumaadi brings his sword close to his eyes and says hoom. He looks at the sky, casts his glance at the audience, closes his eyes, and looks down.

Just then the music starts, the drummer plays the war-drum, the priest-impersonator becomes possessed again, and many others also become possessed.

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A festival (koola) of Jumaadi is being organized. The Buuta-performer, Kariya Pambada, has come to impersonate Jumaadi at the festival. He puts on a pair of beaded heavy bronze anklets (gaggara) and impersonates Jumaadi. This

is a special koola festival organized by Dadu Poojary. Jumaadi tells Dadu Poojary,

'O Dadu Poojary, whatever happened in the past, happened; let it be. In my spiritual realm I will punish those who have indulged in wrongdoings; don't worry. All the members of the village are my family. If something happens to the right hand, the left hand is also affected. I have accepted happily the food-offering made today. I have presented you the magical sandalwood paste. I will always protect the progeny of your family and I will not allow any harm done to her in the future.'

Dadu Poojary genuflects before the folk deity.

The drummer beats the war-drum and the musicians play the music. The possession ritual of theBuuta-performer, Pambada, thus ends.

Original title: Osayo

Published in the first issue of the quarterly magazine, Madipu of Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy in 1994

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# THE HONOURABLE MAN

'Come on, we are already late; we have to cover a long distance. When I wanted to go alone you pleaded with me to take you along with me,' says Sitakka.

She urges the boys to walk faster. They are three: her son, Sadana; and Sadana's friend and neighbour, Raju; and she.

Raju is in the seventh standard at an elementary school in a nearby town. Sadana—his full name is Sadananda—has discontinued his studies and he now works in a hotel, Sirdeyi Bhavan of one Appraya Kamath.

They are on the way to the inauguration ceremony of a newly constructed temple at Bandadi. A three-day festival is going on and today is the second day of the festival. The newly constructed temple is some seven miles from the residence of Sitakka.

Sitakka has heard that devotees from different places came to participate in the temple ceremony and theywere served a good meal. It seems on the first day of the ceremony itself some five thousand people were served a meal.

She had decided to go to the inauguration ceremony long ago. In spite of her heavy work as a domestic help, she attends various religious ceremonies and rituals: Annual festival(koola) of folk deities; chariot festival (theer) and fairs (aayana) of the village temples; buffalo-race (kambula); and the annual festival of Saint Mary (saantmaari). If someone accompanies her, she sometimes goes to the aalade festival. She occasionally goes to see dakke bali ritual at Padubidre; the chariot festival at Pernankila; the annual

festival (neema) of Baiderlu (Koti Chennaya) at PeryottuGarodi; and field drama shows (yakshagana) staged at various places. She is a very religious person; she would make at least a token of offering whenever she attends religious ceremonies.

She works as a domestic help of one Rameggadru (Rame Heggade). He is a big name in the village: He owns a rice mill and he is into silkworm and poultry farming. There is enough work in his household and whether it is the rainy season or otherwise, food is never a problem. Workers are given enough food. However same is not true when it comes to paying wages. He pays very meagre wages.

There is a Tulu saying: The wage is enough to buy a piece of woollen blanket after the cost of food provided is discounted.

Sitakka's two sons are already married and they are staying separately. Her youngest son Sadana stays with her. She is a tenant of Rameggadru.

Rameggadru and the parents of Raju went to the temple ceremony the day before. Rameggadru is managing the Bandadi temple. It is said that as he has given a large donation his name would be inscribed on a stone plaque and it would be installed in front of the temple. His name would be printed on the souvenir to be published later. It seems the plaque would last as long as the sun and the moon last.

Sitakka had told the wife of Eggade (Heggade) the day before that she would be going to the temple function at least for a short while. Raju's mother Korapalakka had requested Sitakka to take Raju along with her when she went to the function. When Sadana goes would Raju remain without going along with him?

However much she tried, Sitakka could not finish her

work in the household of Eggade (Heggade) till late evening.

After she has finished her work, she has to cook dinner at home. The day before she had collected a few button mushrooms (kallalaambu) in the grove of boovu trees. She cuts a cucumber (taute) into pieces, adds the mushrooms, and keeps them for boiling. She cooks rice in a mud vessel. When the rice is boiled, she drains the water into a wooden trough (marayi). Then she cooks a vegetable dish of basale (Malabar spinach, Basella alba). When she has finished cooking, Sadana comes home. Raju has been waiting to go to the function since morning and is pressing her to proceed. All three take dinner and then they start.

After covering some distance and tired, Sadana asks his mother,

'How far is the temple, mother?'

When they started it was evening and the sun was about to set. They have walked two miles. There is no conveyance available at these late hours and therefore they have to go on foot. There is a bus, but it makes two trips to the village only during the day time. There is a shorter road to the temple and even by that road they would have to walk four miles to reach the temple. Sadana has hurt his feet as he walked on the rubbles lying on the road.

It is indeed an adventure to take children anywhere when there is no proper transport facility!

The temple is still four miles away. Comforting the children, Sitakka says,

'The temple is not very far here, my sons; the distance may be equal to the distance between the house of Eggade and your school, or perhaps a little longer.'

It is pitch-dark; Raju has a torch and they walk in the torch light. The three-mile stretch of the road is little dangerous. There is a dense forest.There is a rumour that a

naipili (hyena) roams in this part of the forest. The boys jump out of fear when they see glow-worms (menpuri). What would have happened if a tiger were to appear! They would have screamed. Nobody walks on this stretch of the road when it is dark. If somebody hides in the thickets, you would not know.

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'My dear children,' says Sitakka, 'to relieve your tension, I will tell you a story.'

The boys become alert. Raju likes new stories. They tell her, 'Very nice of you, please tell.'

From a sachet tucked in her sari, she takes out betel leaves and areca nut pieces, applies a little of lime to the betel leaves, and chews them together; and spits out the betel juice. She looks around and realizes that they have reached a place called Tirtolike. If they cross Kudtakumer, they would reach the grove, Kuntala Paadi (forest of violet berries). Many unfortunate events had happened in the grove. When they reach Madmayil, then there is no danger.

'Look here, the events described in the story happened ten to fifteen years ago. In those days we did not have so many houses and shops that we find now and there was no electricity. There was a shop at Belle and another, at Edmer. There was a hotel, and a toddy shop at Tirlolike. The area from Tirtolike to Madmayil was a dense forest. There were thickets of bamboo plants. Even during the day people were afraid to enter the forest area. There was a mud road and it is the same road on which we are walking now. However, there were no cars or buses then.'

'At Madmayil there was a liquor joint (gadang). It was an unlicensed outlet. People in the village used to brew spurious liquor (gangasara, "country liquor") and the liquor

shop at Madmayil sold this liquor.'

'There were three customers who came to the liquor shop daily. What are their names? Well, their names are on the tip of my tongue; however, I don't get them now. Let it be. Though they belonged to three different castes, they were close friends. They went the liquor shop in the evening. They gossiped about the stories circulating in the village till late evening.Because of the continuous chattering their tongues perhaps got lot of exercise. Then they went home. But sometimes they got fully drunk; fell down outside the door of the liquor shop and returned home the following day. All three were married, with wives and children.'

'On that day the people of the village had completed farming activities for the season. Nowadays there is often drought; but in the month of Kaartel (June / July) those days it rained heavily. It was Kaartel and it was raining the whole day. It became dark. There was (is) a river in the village and people crossed the river by a boat. A person crossed the river and came to the liquor shop. He might have been 35 to 40 years of age. He was well-built and suited and booted. He was carrying a large trunk. He kept it down and unlocked the lock to take out a towel to wipe himself dry.'

'There was a young bartender in the liquor shop. Apart from him, there were those three regular customers. The moment they saw the stranger, their eyes were fixed on him. They saw costly things in the trunk. There were three or four bundles of currency notes. He was wearing a costly watch and also a costly ring. He might have come from some foreign country.'

'He pulled out a long cigarette, lighted it, and took a deep puff. He sat down and asked the three customers, who were looking at him,

"How far is Kodangala from here?"

"In this pouring rain how do you go to Kodangala?"

"I have come from Bombay; I went to Bombay when I was a very small boy. Then I went to Dubai and I was in Dubai for ten years. This is the first time I am returning home. It is almost twenty years since I went away from here. No one knows me here or recognizes me. I came to the other side of the river by a taxi. It became very late. No bridge has been built over the river yet?"'

'He started talking to them and also began drinking with them. He realized that the three men were already dead drunk; saliva was flowing from the corners of their mouths. He told the bartender to serve them three more glasses of liquor.'

'One of them asked him,

"Who is there at Kodangala?"

"My mother Marsina Bai stays there alone; no one else from our family stays in the village. I have not informed her that I would be coming."'

'The threesome whispered among themselves. Then one of them said,

"Are you the son of Marsina Bai? You should have told us earlier. Don't worry. Our house is close to the house of your mother. It is our responsibility to reach you to your house. Let's go."'

'He became very happy. They stayed for some more time and drank. The rains slightly slowed down and it started drizzling. They started; one of the regular customers carried the trunk on his head.'

'When they reached the Kuntal Paadi the person carrying the trunk put down the trunk. When the man from Dubai was about to ask why, they attacked him,pinned him down, and strangulated him.'

'The stranger breathed his last. They dragged the body

into the grove and hid it behind a thicket. One of them removed his dirty dhoti of eight mulas, made a loop, and fastened it around neck of the body. They hanged the body from a banyan tree. They carried the trunk and after going home divided the loot into three equal parts. Each got money and gold worth thousands of rupees.'

'The following day when some women of the village went to the grove to gather foliage, they saw the body and screamed. Flies were sitting on the body.They thought that the person had committed suicide. They rushed to the village and informed the people of the village. Some men went to the grove; but, no one was able to identify the body. Marsin Bai would never know whether her son was dead or alive. The story of the stranger ended thus.'

After hearing the story the hair of the boys stood on ends. Curious to know who these threesome were, Raju asks,

'Where are these men who killed the stranger now?'

'If you are asking about them, let me tell you something. After they got the loot, the threesome became rich. They constructed palatial houses and led a luxurious life. However if no one knew about their crime, God surely would. Not only that after committing such a heinous crime, the conscience of the person would surely prick.'

'One of them was going by this forest road one day and he felt as if something hit on his chest. He went home, omitted blood, and died suddenly. The second hanged himself from a tree. Even their children did not make much of a progress in life,' says Sitakka.

She chews paan again. As the children have been engrossed in the story, theyhave not realized that they have crossed the Kuntal Paadi. The story has frightened them and the fear has driven away their sleep. Therefore, they

have walked fast. In the meanwhile they hear the music, burst of fireworks, explosion of piped gun powder, and beating of the large kettle drum (nagari). They realize that they have almost reached the temple.

'O mother, at least the bartender had some information about the stranger. Why did he not tell the truth?' asks Raju.

'Of course he should have told; however, on the following day, three of them came to his house early in the morning and threatened,

"If you open your mouth you will face the same fate as the stranger," they told him.'

'He was sacred. There is a saying in Tulu: "If you can save your skin you could at the least survive begging." On the same night, leaving behind his wife and children, he ran away to the region above the ghats,' says Sitakka and takes a deep breath and sighs.

She continues,

'He may be somewhere; he will come back one day. With that hope I have not yet removed my mutteesana (the symbol of being a married woman with the surviving husband). O Raju, the bartender at the liquor shop is none other than the father of my Sadana.'

Sitakka has never revealed the truth to any one till now. Sadana seems to be quite disturbed.

'What happened to the third person?' Raju asks again.

'What can I say about him? People suspect that this person might have had a hand in the death of the other two. Why should we bother about it? A woman like me, God willing, will make a living working in the households of other people. I don't have the desire to prosper on the riches of others. Children don't tell anybody, the third person is none other than our...'

When she is about to complete the sentence, there is a loud sound of exploding piped gunpowder and her word is drowned in the sound of the explosion.

The title of the story in Osayo (2014):Thaadidonji Kathe

Translator's Note: The aforesaid story first appeared in the Tulu collection of short stories of Muddu Moodubelle, Udipu in 1987 with the title, Onji Saadida Kathe and the name of the third murdereris revealed as Rame Gowdru. The Kannada version of the above story is included in Mettilugalu (Kannada, 1991), the name of the landlord is Rame Gowda and he is mentioned as the third person who murdered the stranger. In Osayo (Tulu, 1994) and Osayo (Tulu, 2014) the name of the third murderer is not revealed at the end of the story. In Moodubelle Kathegalu (Kannada, 2013), the name of the third murderer is revealed and he is Rame Gowdru.

Broadcast on Akashvani on July 1978

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# BETAL AND SUB-INSPECTOR OF POLICE, IKRAME (VIKRAMA)

There is an uneven mud road close to the village. On the right side of the road there is a grove,Boovupaadi. SI (Sub-inspector) Ikrame is standing at the foot of a kiraal boovu (Malabar ironwood) tree and he is disturbed.

Two police constables have gone to escort the station officer and the remaining constables have gone to provide security at the felicitation function of a minister. The police-writer Ugrasenava is on a medical leave.

'At such a critical time this wretched man has hanged himself in the middle of the grove,' feels the SI.

When the secretary to the minister received the message that someone was found hanging in the grove, he directed Ikrame to go there to investigate.

However he has no conveyance to proceed and he curses the dead man,

'Why did this loathsome man come to this village to hang himself? He should have hanged himself in his own village.'

Holding his pistol and looking out for a lift, SI starts walking on the mud road.

It must have been 48 hours since the man hanged himself. Flies are hovering around the body.

'This place appears like an earthquake-affected area where no soul seems to be around,' complains the SI.

He curses the man again. Just then the ghost of the dead person confronts the police officer:

'O Ikrama, don't you think that laws have just remained in the law books without being enforced and the

social unrest has crossed the limits? Are you not perturbed by this state of affairs? Wait a minute; to sooth your nerves, I will tell you a story,' says the ghost.

The ghost begins the story:

There is a village called Kudchakumer. The population of the village is around 600. Some own landed property, some work as farmhands, and some others earn their living doing odd jobs—digging wells, doing construction work, repairing roads, and so on.

There is a small town on the east of Kudchakumer and there are a few shops in the town: a provision store of Venkatramana Kamath, a tea stall of Annappa, a toddy shop of Sitaram Setty, and so forth. The people of the village are able to get their daily provisions from these establishments. Some young women roll beedis, including Laxmi and Santa.

One Kittappanna is the branch manager of a beedi company and he was the former President of the Mandala (Panchayat) of the village. He owns 50 acres of paddy fields and plantations. He is the most influential person in the village. His daughter is doing medicine at Hubli and his only son Obu was in Bombay. He owned a(paan) shop in which he sold cigarettes, beedis and paan. Besides running the shop, he tried his hand at acting and acted in some Hindi films. He ran a dance bar as well. Then he decides to return to Kudchakumer.

Jaggu, the elder brother of Santa, is a fish vendor. He goes to Kudla (Mangalore) every day and brings on a bicycle a basketful of fresh fish. To attract customers, he would shout, 'very fresh fish, mackerels, sardines' and honk, pom, pom.

Kitta and Ranga have returned to the village after completing their studies in a town. They have appeared for an employment test conducted by the banks. They are

waiting for some opening. However, since nothing interesting is happening in the village, they are slightly bored.

There is always some news of caste and communal disturbances, strikes, earthquakes, rape etc. in different parts of the country. Kitta and Ranga are unhappy because nothing is happening in their village that has news value.

The election to the village panchayat is on the cards. There is hustle and bustle in the veranda of Kittappanna's house and a lot people gather daily.

After returning from Bombay, Obu starts a wine shop in the town—Obraj Wines. When he rides on his Pulsar motorbike, the road to the Kudchakumer village comes alive. The girls of the village, who roll beedis, are fascinated by his looks. The local youths, Kitta, Ranga, and Raja notice the change in the behaviour of the girls. They assemble in the veranda of the village panchayat office and form a Yuvaka Mandala (Youth Club). They want to physically attack Obu and thus create some news. They surmise that the newspapers would carry the news and their village would be in the limelight.

They grouse,

'Kittappanna was President of the Mandala Panchayat for so many years. Does he think that the Mandala Panchayat is his family property?'

In the upcoming panchayat election they resolve to field the fish vender Jaggu as their candidate against Kittappanna.

Screening of a film, Ramachari has been scheduled in the house of Kittappanna. Antu, the servant of Kittappanna, has informed the people of the village about the film show. Everybody has gathered for the film show.The screening of the film is on in a room. Somebody throws two burning logs of wood into the room. There is panic. Everybody starts

screaming. Saris of women and turbans of men catch fire and some receive burn injuries. When they try to escape, they find the room locked from outside.

Just then, riding on his motorbike, Obu appears. He breaks the lock and opens the door. Those who are trapped inside rush out. Some gather around those who are hurt, and cry.

'Who are the scoundrels who have indulged in this criminal act?' roars Obu.

He sees some boys standing under a tree. The bicycle of the fish vender Jaggu is found near the window where the burning logs were thrown into the room. The fish basket has fallen down. Close to the bicycle, Jaggu, holding the lock of Santa's hair is seen assaulting her.

Obu instigates the crowd,

'What are you looking? Beat him up.'

Obu catches Jaggu by the collar. Another group goes after the boys who are standing under the tree.

The following day...

When the women of the village go to the grove to gather foliage, they find a man hanging from a tree.

'Now tell me Ikrame, who is the person found hanging in the grove? Remember, after the fire incident, Jaggu and Obu are not to be found around. Is this a case of suicide or murder? If it is murder, who committed the murder? You have to give me the correct answer; if you fail, your head will be blown off, be careful.'

SI Ikrame removes his cooling glasses and with a handkerchief wipes sweat from his face.

'Look here Mr. Ghost, if I can't make out who that person is, how on earth I could have become an SI? It is easy, the person is Jaggu. However, it prove that the dead person is indeed Jaggu, post mortem has to be conducted;

corroborating evidence has to be collected; and if there are witnesses their statements are to be recorded. Santa fell into the trap laid by Obu; it was Obu who stage-managed the fire incident. All these are minor issues; I don't view them seriously. Obu might have already fled to Bombay. I don't have time. The event of the type described by you have happened before... If I were the SI investigating the case, I would have caught each member of the Youth Club and broken their back...'

When the SI is busy talking, the ghost jumps off and enters the dead body again and waits for the next victim.

Original title: Boovupaadid Ikrame

Published in 1993 in the annual special issue of Yuvavahini, Mangalore

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# REPAIRING THE BUND

In the Budyantottu Village preparation for the second paddy crop—suggi natti—is in progress.

Damu gets up before the sunrise and drives a pair of he-buffaloes to the paddy field lying adjacent to a teakwood grove. Compost had been applied to the field two days ago. He harnesses the draught animals to the yoke and fastens a plough to the yoke. He sings the ploughman's song, uraal as he ploughs the field. Uraal is heard from the nearby fields as well. He has to furrow the field two rounds, level it, and make it smooth for transplantation.

Ploughmen sing uraal to entertain the draught animals. Damu generally produces a full-throated uraal; but today he is singing in a low voice.

In the field close-by four women are uprooting paddy seedlings. The movement of their hands in the water-filled nursery as they uproot the seedlings produces a characteristic pacha pacha sound. Their are a few narthes (a kind of freshwater shellfish) in the field, and the women put them in the pouches of their saris (mattel). They would prepare a dish when they go home.

Children are playing with frogs and newly hatched fish (taru miin) in a canal conveying water to the fields.

Bebi brings coffee and some freshly cooked food for Damu. She says,

'Damu, please take.'

He makes the draught animals to take a turn, and stop. He keeps his cane planted in field, goes to the canal, cleans himself, and sits on the ridge of the paddy field. He has already done the ploughing; now he has to level the field with a wooden plank pulled by the draught animals. The following day transplantation will take place. After two days,

the ploughing of the nursery is to be completed. But the question is who would do the ploughing?

'What have you brought?' he asks Bebi.

'Patrodde—the dish that you like the most; don't you remember you had brought yam (theevu) leaves the day before?' she replies.

He does not reply; normally he speaks a lot; but today he does not speak a word. He keeps down his head and eats silently. He drinks the coffee and goes to the stream to wash his hands.

When he returns he asks, 'Has Isaranne got up from sleep?'

'He got up, brushed his teeth, and went straight to the bund (katta). In the past he had never helped to set up the bund; however he has suddenly gone today. He has told that there is no need for you to go there. Yesterday night father and son were whispering something. I don't know when he will improve; it is my bad luck,' says Bebi with a tone filled with sorrow.

Damu remembers vividly the events that took place in the previous night. He looks up, looks at the face of Bebi, and then looks down.

'Go back quickly. If you remain here for long, many tongues would wag. When I remember what Isaranne and your mother-in-law had said the day before, I am afraid, how much torture they would give you in the coming days. Don't take anything to heart. It appears that my emotional bond with this household would soon end,' says Damu. He seems to be worried.

'Don't say that Damu; if you are around, I feel I have someone who is concerned about my wellbeing. But...' she stops in the middle, overwhelmed by emotions.

Wiping her tears with the end of her sari, she goes back.

Damu starts levelling the field.

Since Bebi has come to the field the women uprooting the paddy seedlings in the near-by nursery are unable to concentrate on the job. They keep their ear to the ground and observe every movement of Damu and Bebi. The attention of three ploughmen ploughing the field of Sankappanne too is on Damu and Bebi.

The families of Sankappanne and Santakka are two divisions of the same original family.

Santakka comes to the field and joins the women uprooting the paddy seedlings. One of the women asks her,

'Is your ploughman from your caste? He is a very good worker. Bebi is very much attached to him; she likes him very much.'

At this Santakka explodes:

'He has come to ruin our household. You must have seen how much food she has brought for him—a platter-full. They will make us beggars. This man, Damu, does everything unwanted. I told him to buy a basket (kuttari) to keep our chickens; but, he bought a rattan trap (makkeri) for catching fish. He does not want to keep the old trap. It must be just two years old and he has thrown it into the river. He never finishes his work. He went, not one day, but four days to work on the bund and still the work is not completed. The water that normally flows in the canal is enough for us; we don't need the water from the bund. That queen, who is at home, prepares various dishes for him. There is a Tulu saying, "A person who has no shame becomes popularеasily (naachige kettinaklu uurugu malle)."'

Santakka, though continues her barrage against Damu and Bebi, she concentrates on her work.

In the past when Santakka made disparaging remarks against her daughter-in-law, the women who were doing transplantation with her, used to be surprised.

Bebi is married to Isvara, the son of Santakka. Bebi is educated, good looking, and a good-natured woman. She possesses pleasing manners.

Damu and Bebi are from the same village. He is good at work and obedient. He is a man of good character. The people of Budyantottu village feel that Santakka's household is fortunate to get Damu as their domestic help. There is one person who is not so pleased however, and he is Isvara.

As a Tulu saying goes, you cannot straighten the tail of a dog; similarly it is not possible to reform Isvara. This is what people comment.

The neighbours of Santakka suspect that everything is not all right in her household. The person responsible for the suspicion is Santakka herself. Her targets are Damu and Bebi. When people hear the juicy stories about Damu and Bebi, would not they be happy? Of course they would because of the entertainment value.

After returning from the paddy field, Bebi sits on the doorsill of her house and cries. Her marital life has been a misery.

She got married to Isvara five years back. She is from Kabattar village. She is the only daughter of her parents and she has three elder brothers. Her maternal family owns a few paddy fields, a stretch of dry land, and a piece of land suitable for kitchen garden (kumer).

Santakka also possesses a large landholding in which two crops—kaarti and suggi—used to be raised. Her family got the land on lease, on a fixed rent (mulageni). After Damu joined her household as a domestic help, she has started raising the third crop—kolake.

Younger brothers of Isvara are not staying in the village and they had gone elsewhere seeking jobs. Isvara is preoccupied with local politics, cockfighting, buffalo-race, and liquor business. He has hardly any time to look after

paddy cultivation or take care of his land. He is a member of the village panchayat. And he drinks. If he gets time after these pastime engagements, he would apply himself to farming.

He was looking for a farmhand who would do the household chores, plough the fields, and stay as a member of the family. One day Bebi's father came to visit them. Isvara mentioned to his father-in-law that he needed a good domestic help to assist him in paddy cultivation.

It was in fact Bebi, who had said,

'Don't you think our Damu would be a good choice, daddy?'

'In Kabattar everybody likes Damu. Would they allow him to go? If he comes, it would be very nice,' said her father.

Damu played a major role in the marriage of Bebi: He made all the arrangements on the day of finalizing the proposal.On the day of the wedding he put up the marriage pandal, took care of the guests, and supervised cooking and serving feast to the guests. Isvara was aware of Damu's work. When Bebi suggested his name, Isvara agreed readily. On the same day he went to Kabattar and brought him to his house.

Damu is an able-bodied young man. He is good at activities related to paddy farming: ploughing, paring edges of paddy fields, setting mud on them, cleaning canals, carrying the harvested paddy stalks to the yard, threushing them, making oval-shaped packs (mudi) of rice, and so on.

Damu is also an expert jockey in driving buffaloes at the buffalo-race. In the entire Kabattar village, no other person is as proficient as Damu in racing buffaloes.

Damu is the neighbour of Bebi at her native place. He is a landless tenant (budu okkel). He had studied up to seventh standard. Then his parents discontinued his education and put him to work as a farmhand. He also did

not show much interest in school learning. Since he has been working in paddy fields at a young age he has become an expert in paddy cultivation.

Bebi and Damu grew up together in the same neighbourhood. They were almost like children of the same family. Damu is four years older than Bebi. When she passed SSLC examination, Damu became very happy. Five years after she passed SSLC, she got married.

Budyantottu and Kabattar are in the same taluk and yet Budyantottu is very far from Kabattar. A distant relative of her mother had brought the proposal. This is how Bebi got married to Isvara. Two years after they were married, Damu came to stay with them.

Damu is made to work the whole day without rest. The alcoholic Isvara, who is more interested in the activities of the village, does not do any work of the household. He is hardly at home. He comes home late in the night, fully drunk. Sometimes Damu goes to bring him; he would hardly stand and walked with the support of Damu.

Damu and Bebi maintain an affectionate relationship; they often joke together. Their friendly relationship is not appreciated by some of the gossip-mongering neighbours. They spread rumours about them.

When the village midwife (padeti) Kusakka casually asks Santakka about the relationship between Damu and Bebi, since she is already very angry with them, flares up,

'My son was not drinking. When this useless beauty entered the household, everything has changed. She is friendly with Damu. Even when her husband is around, she fools about with Damu. Haven't you seen the cat drinking milk with the closed eyes?'

Thus, Santakka has been disparaging her daughter-in-law for quite sometimes. Of late Isvara has also heard her outbursts.She does not have the courage to say directly to

Damu whatever has been saying behind his back. Where would she get a worker as efficient as Damu? Damu and Bebi have realized this quite late.

By the time the suggi cultivation is completed, the water level in the river is reduced and water does not flow in the canal conveying water to the fields of Santakka. To raise the third (kolake) crop, therefore, a bund has to be put up across the river to raise the water level.

To augment the water level there is a bund at Bommegundi; it has to be repaired every year. Farmers from the opposite sides of the river come to repair the bund. They work day and night for a week and to repair the bund they use boulders, trunks of trees, branches of trees, hay, and mud. The water level thus raised is sufficient to grow the last crop of the season. Once upon a time, to irrigate their fields, farmers operated picotta (pane, a kind of traditional water-lifting lever) or kontu. In recent years they use pump sets.

The work of repairing the bund was started a few days back and today is the last day. The work will be finished late in the night and the flow of water downstream will stop for a while. At this moment the people of the village go fishing. They use fishing lines (gaala), fishing nests, fishing trapes (guuri) and wicker baskets (matteri). Different types of fish are caught—madenji, morante, kijan etc. Some fish in the lantern light and kill fish with clubs and scythes.

Damu used to lay the trap to catch fish; however, this time he has not done. He vividly remembers the happenings of the previous night. As usual Isvara came drunk. The moment he entered the house, he shouted 'Damu'. He abused Damu. Santakka joined him and said, 'Because of your slackness things have come to this far.'

Isvara held Damu by his neck and shouted,

'If a dog is pampered, it would lick the curry-vessel

(naayig salige kornda nesale nakkundu). You rascal, tell me since when the love-drama between you and Bebi has been going on?'

Damu felt as if a big tree fell on him. He got terribly angry and did not meekly submit. He said,

'Whatever you have said befits your character. You are shouting at me because I am working for you. Be careful.'

Santakka joined her son,

'You, the arrogant brat; if the grace of our family folk deity is still upon us, before the sunset today, he will teach you a lesson.'

Damu decides to plough the fields for the last time and then return to his village. He drives the draught animals to the field and starts ploughing.

It is afternoon and Isvara suddenly materializes. He behaves as if nothing happened the night before. He tells Damu,

'I have laid the trap; go at night and bring it.'

Damu does not want to bring the trap; but what could he do? He decides to go back to his village the following day.

It is late night; Bebi and Santakka unroll their mats and sleep. But Bebi doesnot get sleep. Damu has gone to the river with a lantern. The scheduled time of completing the work of the bund is fast approaching. And then a hoo sound comes floating in the air. It is the signal that the work of repairing the bund is completed. Just then, a cry is heard, 'Ayyayyoo, I am dying; somebody is killing me.'

When Bebi hears the cry, she opens the door, and rushes towards the river, calling out, 'Damu, Damu'.

Original title: Kattagandi
Published in the Tulu monthly Tulu Rajya in 1992

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# THE MYSTERY

The news is everywhere.

Pilikunja is a small village. No event worth recording might have occurred in the village in the past. However, the land records show why the place got the name, Pilikunja. There is a hillock on the edge of the village and in the hillock there is a cave.It is said that a tiger stayed in the cave. Therefore the village got the name Pilikunja. (In Tulu, pili is tiger; kunja, hillock.)

There aremany thatched huts and a few cemented dwelling units in the village.The village is abounded with paddy fields and plantations. Most of the area of the village is a hilly terrain. Majority of the people here belong to the Gonda and Billari communities, and they are mainly engaged in paddy cultivation. They grow coconut and areca plantations as well. There are a few houses of Soliga, Mogera, and Marathi communities. They reside in the land allotted by the government. They are employed as labourers in the plantations of the Gonda community. They also pursue horticulture. There are a few Christian households as well.

On the hill and in the valley, you could find a few huts with screens of coconut leaves.

The population of Pilikuja consists largely of children, women, and old people. The youths of the village have gone to Benguru, Sollapura, Ichalakaranji, and other places looking out for jobs. A few young men of the Gonda community are in the village and they are the self-appointed leaders of the village.

There is a primary school. It has one teacher and the number of children could be counted on fingers.

One Kukra Mogera resides in the village. He has a five-acre land leased by the government. The land is on the edge of the Kudremale forest. It is a hilly region. Imala is his wife,

and she is blind. The couple have eight children.

Kukra harvests bamboos of the forest land and sells them in the Pilikunja market. Generally those who buy bamboos from him do not pay him well. During the free time, he works as a porter at the vegetable shop of Ragavan Nambiar and the provision store of Kitraya. He earns additional five to ten rupees a day. He gets his daily drink at the liquor joint of the town with the amount.

There is a mud road leading to the Pilikunja market. There are a few shops in the market that sell necessary things needed for the people of the village. There is a bigger market at Sirva. Chandrapura is on the other side of the Pilikunja market. You have to walk four miles and then take a bus to reach Chandrapura. Every Saturday, there is a weekly fair at the Plikunja market. Vendors from different places bring vegetables, fish, spices, and clothes, and sell them in the fair. The people of the Pilikunja village lead a happy life.

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As usual Kukra goes to the hill at Attinja to harvest bamboos. He harvests bamboos, carries the bundle of the bamboos on the head, and proceeds towards the Pilikunja market.

On the way, he meets a young man and he asks,

'Uncle, do you recognize me?'

'Oh! My goodness, you must be Nakkura!' replies Kukra, in utter surprise. After recognizing the stranger, he requests him,

'Please help me to put down the bundle.'

Kukra leans the bundle against a tree, removes his turban, and wipes the sweat of his face and chest with the turban.

'Everyone is all right at home, uncle?' enquires Nakkura.

Nakkura is his nephew—theson of his younger sister.

He resides on an islet, Ankudru. It is some twelve miles from the Pilikunja village. It is surrounded by freshwater on all the sides and its area is around four to five acres. Nakkura and his parents reside in a hut. When he came of age he started working in the coconut plantations. He makes a living plucking coconuts and clearing weeds. Kukra does not know what his nephew is doing.

Nakkura has an athletic physique. He appears as a bridegroom in his long trousers, bush-shirt, and neatly combed hair.

'By the looks it appears as if you have just arrived from Bombay, you scoundrel. Anyway, whose trousers are they?' Kukra asks affectionately.

The nephew feels slightly embarrassed. He replies,

'They are given by one Albert when I plucked coconuts of his plantation, uncle,' clarifies Nakkura.

'It must have been a few years since I have seen you. You don't come even to the food offering ritual of our folk deities that I organize in the month of Besa (May / June),' Kukra complains.

'How is your mother? Come, let us go to the market,' says Kukra.

Kukra removes the shirt and the towel that he has tied around his waist; winds them into a ring and keeps the ring on his head. Then he lifts the bundle of bamboos and places it on the ring. Then he says, 'Let us go.'

The bamboos are for the mason, Kisnappa. He delivers the bamboos to the mason; however the does not pay him. He says,

'Kukra, collect the money tomorrow.'

Kukra's face becomes pale. He wants to celebrate the surprise visit of his nephew. The nephew has come after many years. Kukra has no money to entertain him and the mason has not paid for the bamboos. Whenever he gets

any money he keeps it in the pockets of his shorts; but, most of the time his pockets are empty.

Nakkura realizes the predicament of his uncle.

'Let it be uncle; today I will pay for everything; you need not bother about it,' thus he comforts his uncle. The twosome enters a liquor joint.

'What would you like to have?'

'Give us a quarter (bottle of liquor).'

'Do have anything fried?'

'Yes; sardines, mackerels, and bondas.'

'Two sardines, please.'

Nakkura takes out a high denomination banknote and gives to the bartender.

Kukra notices the banknote and becomes proud of his nephew.

'You rascal, you seems to be doing well. Of course it is not at all surprising; after all you are my nephew,' Kukra says with immense pride at the success of his nephew.

The liquor shop is filled with people, as in a village fair.

The bartender fetches a quarter-bottle of liquor and two fried sardines. The uncle and the nephew go out and sit at one end of a bench to have their drink.

They finish the bottle and ask for one more quarter bottle of the stuff. Nakkura makes his uncle drink heavily; and he becomes fully drunk. He is not able to stand. They get up; swaying and falling, they go.

As they walk Nakkura tells in a low voice the purpose of his visit. When Kukra hears what his nephew has said, he is shocked and is about to collapse.

As they reach close to Kukra's hut, Kukra tells his nephew,

'You are like my son. As long as I am alive I will not leave you to your fate. However, I need to tell your aunt, my wife, about the event that you have told me; it is surprising news

and she must be informed.'

Nakkura disappears suddenly.

Kukra opens the thorn-gate of his hut; swaying and falling, he enters the yard of the hut. Just then Nakkura appears.

Kukra, calling out his wife,

'Hey Imala, are you listening? My nephew, Nakkura has come.'

Nakkura, calls out, 'O Aunty.'

She is blind; but, reprimands her husband,

'It appears you are fully drunk today.'

She becomes very happy because Nakura has come.

After dinner, Kukra sits near his wife in the veranda of the hut and tells her,

'Are you listening? There is a piece of news; Nakkura has informed me that he got married.'

'What are you telling? When? Without informing his maternal uncle?'

'Everything happened suddenly, it seems. The girl had stopped eating insisting that he should marry her. Her marriage was being finalized with another boy. She started crying loudly, and he had no option but to marry her secretly. This is what he told me,' Kukra confides to his wife.

'That means, they had, what people call a "registered marriage?"'

'I would have arranged a feast if both of you were to come. Hey, Nakkura, when are you bringing your wife?' she asks.

'If you so desire, I will bring her tomorrow.'

'Why are you making a show of it? Bring her tomorrow and both of you stay overnight. Though I will not able to see her, at least I can touch her and feel her.'

Thus she lifts his spirits. He becomes happy. This is

what he has been hoping for. Her invitation for him is like 'a thin roasted pancake (rutti) slipping from your hand and falling into the chicken curry (rutti jaard koorida rasakk buurlakaand).'

On the following day, he gets up early in the morning, dresses himself, and rushes out in a hurry. In the afternoon he brings his blonde-eyed wife, Susila. Her bangles make a jingling sound.

Imala asks,

'Only two of you have come?'

'Yes aunty, other members of the family are busy, they can't come.'

Imale touches Susila. When she touches the abdomen of Susila, she becomes a bit suspicious. Thinking that the modern generation of girls may have this kind of physique, she keeps quiet.

The preparation for a feast is underway. Two daughters of Imale are busy cooking and she is guiding them. Everybody has a sumptuous feast.

Many days have passed since their arrival; still there is no sign of the couple going from here. Kukra has to support a family of ten persons, including his eight children. They are leading a hard life. Now there are twelve persons to feed. Nakkura and wife have not gone out of the hut even once since their arrival.

One day Kukra takes his wife close to the fence of their hut and says,

'Are you listening? We have been taken for a ride by the couple, do you know this?'

'I have no idea, what happened?'

'They are rascals; they are not married; they ran away from home; and she is pregnant and it is the fourth month.'

'O my God! I suspected on that day itself when I

touched her.'

'They stayed in Sirva for a week, it seems. The other day he went there and brought her. His people are looking for them. I have been told that she is from a higher caste. If her people come to know that they are in our hut, they would not spare us. Before we decide what to do let me visit his house at Ankudru.'

Imala is frightened. Kukra cleans his teeth; consumesthe gruel; and dresses himself with a shirt anda dhoti. Normally he does not put ona shirt. He says loudly so that everybody in the hut hears,

'I have some work in the Pilkunja market; I will be back soon.'

He goes to Ankudru, meets the parents of Nakkura, and enquires about their wellbeing. Casually he asks about Nakkura,

'I don't see Nakkura; where is he?'

'Where the hell he has gone, I don't know,' says his father.

'Parents bring up children and once they grow up they have no use of the parents. This fellow, Nakkura, with whom he has eloped and who that cunning girl is, nobody knows,' his mother says, annoyed at the behaviour of her son.

'The girl's family is looking for them. If they find them they would cut them into pieces. They have expelled her from their community,' his father says.

Kukra pretends as if he does not know anything.

'Let us find out where he is. You come with me,' Kukra tells his brother-in-law.

They reach the fence of Kukra's hut. When they are about to enter the hut, Nakkura dashes out by an internal door and vanishes. He has taken with him his personal belongings as well as the jewellery of his wife. She cries

loudly.

Nakkura's father notices everything. Without uttering a single word, he goes away.

It is a week since Nakkura has disappeared. He has not come back. Susila has become a burden to Kukra and his family. Two of his daughters roll beedis. She also learns to roll beedis.

A new beedi collection centre has been opened at Pilikunja. The centre collects finished beedis and provides raw materials to make fresh ones. Susila goes to the collection centre every day to deliver the finished beedis and bring fresh beedi leaves.

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Kukra is in the news in Pilikunja. He tries to divert the attention of the people away from Susila, offering different clarifications; but, they spread scandalous stories about her. The Gonda, Billari, and Soliga boys have started gathering near the provision stores, vegetable outlets, the liquor shop etc. They harass her. They would comment, 'The young thing seems to be tasteful.'

When Narsima was a member of the Pilikunja panchayat, he had promised Kukra that he would provide him a house under the Ashraya scheme of the government. Many a time he spoke to Kukra about it. Once or twice Kukra went to his house. Many rumours have been started regarding what is going on between the two. Susila is also the subject of the rumours.

In the past the young men of Pilikunja used to work as farmhands and plantation workers. They remained busy. At times they would of course fool around women workers of the plantations. Recently there is a change in their behaviour.

The moment it is evening they gather in the Pilikunja market and ogle at ladies. The elders of the village are worried of the new development.

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Of late the village is showing some signs of development. The mud road has been repaired. An old rusted bus has started plying twice a day between Govukal town and the Pilikunja market.

Ranganna Gonda is the patel of the Pilikunja village. His son is Lingaraja. After completing a degree in medicine at Mangalore Lingaraja has opened a clinic in the building owned by his father. Pilikunja market got electricity because of his efforts. Behind his clinic, one Sankri has opened a tea stall. Two more hotels and a wine shop have come up in the market. A paan shop has been set up close to the clinic.

The wine shop belongs to Narsima. He was a member of the village panchayat for two terms. He is a civil contractor as well as forest contractor, and he is into timber business as well. He has invested around a lakh of rupees to open the wine shop. From where did he get the money?

Kukra remembers what Ragavan Nambiar told him once. According to him Narsima made money misappropriating the money meant for the welfare schemes like Rozgar Yojana and Asraya Yojana. It is also rumoured that he cut trees of the forestland and sold them to timber merchants with the connivance of Fakira, the forest guard posted at Kudremale forest.

Though Kukra is witness to this, he does not want to get involved. He feels,

'I am an unlettered person. Why should I poke my nose in the affairs of others? Let the educated deal with the

misdeeds of the educated.'

Kukra minds his own business; he does not interfere with the activities of others. He does manual work and earns his living. He grows different vegetables and has grown a few coconut trees. He sells the produce and earns some additional income.

One day,a few young persons arrive by a bus at the Pilikunja village. They have come to enrol the uneducated among the villagers under the mass education programme. They enrol two children who had dropped out from school. They advise Kukra and others to enrol. The uneducated girls feel shy to enrol themselves. Kukra is reluctant to enrol saying that he has to go for work. There are children of the school-going age in the village; but, they are not going to school; instead they roam in the village in loin clothes. They eat whatever they get: mangoes, jackfruits, wild berries etc.Some member of the Patel family seems to have remarked,

'Children who are already in school do not have proper dress. Why do these people need education?'

The daily routine of Kukra is going to the forest, gathering five to six bundles of bamboo, and selling them in the Pilikunja market. From the money he gets, he buys two seers of rice and some fish. Then he would go to the liquor joint and have his drink of locally brewed liquor. He begins to feel that the increased attention he is receiving in the Pilikuja market is because of Susila.

In the meanwhile there is news that Silli, the daughter of Dumingo Madthiser, has secretly married Ragavan Nambiar. Everybody is talking about it.

Silli had passed SSLC from a high school at Edmer. When Lingaraja opened theclinic she joined as his compounder.

Silli's house is located in a lacchil (a small, fenced piece

of land with a few shrubs and trees). She goes to the clinic by the road that winds its way by the vegetable shop of Ragavan Nambiar. He has been staying in Pilikunja for the last ten to twelve years. He runs a vegetable outlet. He came from Kerala. He is good looking and young. It seem he came to Pilikunja along with the people who were engaged in sawing wood. He goes to Chandrapura every Saturday to replenish the stock of vegetables. He is a good man and he is well-respected in the area. People used to say that he has an affair with Silli. This is revealed when they got married in a church at Sirva.

'What kind of a woman is she to marry a person who has come, God alone knows from where? Aren't there young men like us in the village?' complain the Gonda boys, Ragurama and Kisnakumar. They have become quite agitated of the happening. After Susila, it is now Silli, who is the topic of discussion in the entire Pilikunja village.

The information that Silli and Susila are friends, incenses the local youths even more.

Ragurama and his friends start coming to the clinic just for the sake of it since Silli works there. She resigns from her job and starts assisting her husband in his vegetable stall.

Lingaraja appoints a trained nurse from Bailurhis compounder. Susila, who used to visit the clinic of Lingaraja frequently, has a miscarriage. This, Silli comes to know from Kukra. She criticizes the physician, Lingaraja. The information reaches him.

The criticism of the doctor by Silli hurts the ego of the youths of Pilikunja. They plan,

'The lady who has eloped with a Malayali youth has the temerity to criticize the doctor who is the son of our village patel? If we don't deal with the insolent Christian

lady, what worth is our manliness? We have to teach her a lesson. Ragavan Nambiar wants to contest the next panchayat election. We should not allow him to contest. First, we have to break his bones.'

The above exchange takes place in the clinic of Lingaraja. They plan their move.

That day evening Ragurama, Kisnakumar, Seena, and Kutty meet. They go to the wine shop of Narsima, drinkthe locally brewed liquor, and become drunk.

The gang comes to the vegetable shop. Ragavan Nambiar and Silli are in the shop.

'Hey, what is the price of tomatoes?' asks Seena

'Six rupees a kilo,' Ragavan replies.

'Hey, in Kitraya's shop you get any quantity for four rupees, you rascal. Why is the rate so high in your shop?' Ragurama shouts, staring at the couple.

Nambiar tells them politely,

'I don't have the tomatoes that could be sold at four rupees a kilo. Please go from here.'

'You scoundrel, you are talking to us with so much arrogance. What are you looking? Pulling him out and bash him,' shouts Ragurama.

'You rascal,' screams Kisna. Seena and Kutti charge at Nambiar. They pull him out and kick him repeatedly. Silli, who is completely scared, screams for help. She pleads with the attackers not to beat her husband.

They get angrier,

'You harlot, you abuse our doctor? Have you grown so insolent? We will cure of your arrogance,' shouts Kutti. He charges at her and pulls her by the end of her sari. She kicks him and takes hold of the end of her sari. Screaming for help, she runs and enters a house located behind the shop.

'Kick and break the door; pull her out of the house and

beat her,' shouts Ragurama. Kutti kicks the door and pounds the window. People gather; they just stand there and observe the happening with a great interest. Just then Kukra reaches there. When he hears the commotion he comes running.

He pleads with the attackers,

'O masters, O brothers, don't touch her;what you are doing is immoral; please leave her alone.'

All the attackers turn on Kukra. Seena catches the long hair of Kukra and abuses him,

'Hey whoreson, are you her paramour? Have you started a prostitution racket with the help of Susila?'

He kicks Kukra on his stomach. Kukra pleads for mercy,

'Ayyayyo, I am dying; they are killing me; please help.'

Kukra and Nambiar are lying on the floor. Kutti wants to continue the fracas; however he is forced to retreat since people have already gathered at the scene. All the four—Ragurama, Kisnakumar, Seena, and Kutty—goto the liquor shop to drink again.

Blood oozes from the face and limbs of Ragavan Nambiar. People who have gathered at the place look at him and disperse.

Kukra, getting up slowly, repents,

'I shouldn't have intervened. Why should I interfere in the affairs of others? If I survive I can at least live the rest of my life begging.'

He is not in a position to go to his regular liquor joint. He thinks of gulping a mouthful of 'country liquor' brewed by Ladru. When he reaches Ladru's joint, Narsima comes out of the joint in a hurry. Before Kukra could say anything, he is ready with a police complaint. He takes the thumb impression of Kukra on the complaint and sends it with a person on a bicycle to the police station at Chandrapura.

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Susila has not come to the beedi collection centre for the last three days.

Police cometo the Pilikunja market in a jeep. A few youngsters are standing near a shop. A sub-inspector of police, sporting a thick moustache and wearing a pair of costly sunglasses, peeps out of the jeep and shouts,

'Hey, you come here.'

They are frightened. Two of them come forward. The SI asks,

'There is a dead body here it seems, where is it?'

The boys begin to perspire. Fumbling, they babble,

'Dead body?' We know nothing about it, sir.'

They look for a chance to run away.

'There is a person called Kukra. Where does he stay?' the SI asks again.

'He stays in a hut close to the Kudremale forest,' the boys reply, 'the place is two miles from here.'

'Two of you get into the jeep and show me the place, quick,' orders the SI.

They have no option but to accompany the police. They sit sandwiched between the police constables. The jeep goes fast and stops abruptly close to the fence of Kukra's hut.

'First drag that whoreson, Kukra and dump him in the jeep,' the SI directs the constables. They go to the hut of Kukra and return empty-handed and report,

'Sir, Kukra is not in the hut.'

The sound 'kat,kat' is heard. The boys tell the police that the sound is of Kukra felling bamboos.

The SI orders a police constable, a 'police writer,' and one of the boys to go to the place from where the sound is heard. Then he orders the driver to drive to the cashew

plantation located on the south of the Kudremale forest.

The jeep comes to a halt close to the grove of pangorte trees. The SI tells everybody to get down from the jeep.

The police constable and the police writer drag Kukra by the arm and produce him before the SI.

The SI roars,

'Hey, are you Kukra?'

'Yes, my master.'

'I have been told that you have killed a woman and dumped her body somewhere here; will you show the place, or...?'

'O master, I don't know anything about it; I have not killed anyone; be merciful; please allow me to go.'

'You thief, I will cure of your cunningness, the whoreson,' shouts the SI.

A constable, who has been searching at some distance, screams,

'Sir, see what is there in that corner.'

When they go near the spot, flies fly making a 'znoo' sound and there is an unbearable smell. They find a body of a woman in a pit. The body is bloated.

Kukra sees the body and screams, 'Oh my daughter Susila,' and collapses.

The SI examines the area and orders,

'Kukra, enough of your wailing; constable Rangappa, make a report and take the signatures of everybody present here. Post mortem must be conducted; constables, Steven and Tonte, remain here and guard the body. I will go to the station and make further arrangements. Hey Kukra, get into the jeep.'

They proceed to the police station.

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On the following day, the newspapers published from Pilikunja carry a piece of news in bold letters: KUKRA KILLED SUSILA,DUMPED HER BODY IN THE FOREST.

The news spreads throughout the Pilkunja village and beyond.

There is a suspicion that Narsima Is involved in the murder; however he is absconding. Police come to the Pilikunja market looking for him; but he is not found.The police drink tea provided by Dr Lingaraja and return.

The post mortem report reveals that she might have been suffocated to death pushing her head into water.

When the Billari boys, Kechu and his friends,go to graze cattle, they enter the Kudremale forest. They finda body. Frightened, they run home.

The frightened Kechu informs his father, Taniya. He keeps a piece of iron in the fire, takes out the iron piece when it is heated, and puts it in a pot of water. He makes his son drink the water ostensibly to drive away the fear that he experienced on seeing the dead body.

Taniya is also scared and tells his son not to reveal to anybody what he had seen. Kechu develops fever. Taniya goes to Dr Lingaraja to bring medicine for his son. Taniya tells everything to the physician and the physician informs the police.

Kukra is kept in the police lock-up.

The mason Kisnappa is surprised. Kukra is not the type of a person who would murder someone. He wonders who committed the crime. When Ragavan Nambiar and his wife were attacked it was Kukra who went to help them. A police complaint had been filed by Narsima in the name of Kukra. What happened to the complaint?

Kisnappa comes to the prison and vouchsafes to the innocence of Kukra. He tells the police that he is prepared

to swear in the name of any folk deity that Kukra did not kill Susila.

Kisnappa tries to piece together the puzzle. If the police had come to investigate, they should have investigated the case filed by Kukra; but, they didn't. In the meanwhile Susila is missing. Some people of the village think that she might have left Pilikunja. Ragavan Nambiar and Silli are not seen in Pilikunja.

Was it the body of Susila, or Silli? Narsima is also missing. Therefore, Kisnappa casually asks the police 'writer,'

'Sir, a complaint was filed by Kukra a few days back, did the police receive it?'

'Yes; a complaint has been received.'

'Was it by Kukra?'

'No; it was from a few residents of the Pilikunja village. The complaint said that Kukra and Narsima were engaged in trafficking of women. Further it said that they were forcing the wife of Ragavan Nambiar to join the racket and hence they attacked him, his wife, and Susila.'

'Who said all these, the village patel, or Dr Lingaraja, sir?'

'Why do you want to know? Hum, does the doctor not know? It seems when Susila refused to entertain a customer, Narsima and Kukra pushed her into a well and killed her.'

The mason Kisnappa is totally confused. He returns to Pilikunja.

He wants to talk to the shopkeeper, Kitraya. The following day early in the morning he goes to his shop. Kitraya tells him,

'Kisnappa, yesterday when I went for a shave to the haircut saloon of Sadiya Bandari, he told me that on the day of the disturbance Kukra's nephewhad come to the saloon

for a haircut. He asked with him when Susila normally came to the beedi collection centre.'

Kisnappa sees some connection between the murder of Susila and the appearance of Nakkura in the Pilikunja market.

He catches the bus and goes to the police station. He informs the SI what he had heard. The police officer, accompanied by the mason, comes in a police jeep to Ankudru. When they reach the place they find Nakkura in an inebriated state. He is brought to the police station. When he is interrogated he tells everything:

'I came to the vegetable shop of Nambiar to speak to Silli. Because of the disturbance I could not speak to her. Therefore, I went to the liquor shop for a drink. There I found the gang of Ragurama. When Susila came to the beedioffice, they fell on her. She escaped from the clutches of the gang. I was waiting for her when she reached Kudremale. I tried to grab her, she resisted, and to escape from me she jumped into a well close by.'

But the mason Kisnappa is still puzzled: Who took out the body from the well and dumped it in the cashew grove?

He does not get the answer and the death of Susila remains a mystery.

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She rarely visited Kodangala. On that day she went to Kodangala to attend thebaby showering (pregnancy) ceremony of the daughter of Paddakka. After she returned from the ceremony, she scolded me left and right,

'Why do you invite unnecessary troubles? It appears that the story of Sundara is over. Do you know what Paddu said? "Your son instigated my son (Sundara) to file a case against our landlord. Because of the ongoing court case, we find it difficult to lead a normal life. Your son is responsible for the mess we are in. We would have lived peacefully without fighting with our landlord." This is what she said. Because of your friendship with Sundara and since you have been found in his company, you are receiving these unwanted accolades!'

'What happened, mother,' I asked her even though I was in the know of things.

'It seems somebody had performed black magic on her (Paddakka's) house,' my mother informed me.

Paddakka and my mother were of the same age. Kodangala Village was situated four or five miles from our village and Paddakka resided there with her children. Her eldest daughter Rukmini got married a few years back and she got two children. Her youngest daughter Susila got married a year ago and her baby showering (pregnancy) ceremony was held a few days ago.

Sundara was her third son. Her two sons elder toSundara were in Bombay and two daughters younger to Sundara were studying in an elementary school at Kuntlagudde.

Apart from paddy cultivation, he participated in the

various cultural and religious activities of the village: buffalo race, cockfighting, chariot festival, possession ritual of folk deities, and so and so forth.

'May I go to Kodangala on the coming Sunday,' I asked my mother.

'Please don't go. The landlord of Paddu, Rudre Gowda; and the revenue officer of the village (shiristedaar), Shivappa are very angry with you. They feel that you have instigated Sundara. Paddu and Rudre Gowda are neighbours. If you go to Kodangala, the news would reach the landlord and the revenue official. If something untoward happens, who is there to protect us?' she cautioned me.

'If you keep quiet because of fear, nothing worthwhile can be accomplished; however when you go to help others you need to take ample precautions,' I felt.

Sundara confronted everything with a quixotic sense of courage. Certain recent happenings in his life unnerved him. He retreated into his own shell.

In his difficult days, Sundara should not feel that nobody came to his help; therefore on the following Sunday, being a holiday, I went to meet him.

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Before the enforcement of the Karnataka Land Reforms Act (in 1974), the big landlords of Tulunad led a leisured life. They had enough to eat and their tenants did everything for them. They enjoyed a lot of free time. In immaculate dress they would be seen in towns and cities. Their position as landlords gave them the clout to preside over the village councils, resolve disputes, and award punishments.

Tenants paid to the landlords as rent the major portion of the yield they produced. Apart from the regular rent,

they were required to present gifts to the landlords periodically—vegetables, fruits, coconuts, cocks, and so on. For their maintenance, and for other expenses, the tenants were forced to borrow rice and money from the landlords on interest; the interest was calculated at a compound rate. As a result they led a hand-to-mouth existence and felt helpless and dejected.

The Land Reforms Act gave land to the tillers. Tenants became the owners of the land they cultivated. They had to file a declaration form to claim the property right. When the land reforms act was enforced, there was a rush to file the declaration form—both by the tenants and the landlords.

There were domestic servants attached to the landlords. They did household chores of the landlords and worked in their paddy fields as farmhands. They resided on the land of the landlords, in huts. They too rushed to file the declaration. They argued, 'If something is available for the asking why not avail of the opportunity themselves?'

Some landlords came forward to help their tenants to file the declaration form.

The members of the Farmers Association (Raitha Sangha) who were members of the village ajal became active and helped tenants to submit the mandatory declaration form within the stipulated period.

Some tenants were troubled by a moral dilemma:

'We have been fed and looked after by our landlords. Therefore how to go against them and submit the declaration form?' they felt.

In some cases landlords threatened their tenants:

'If you file the declaration form, we will break your bones and set your houses on fire.'

Many tenants, therefore, did not submit the mandatory

declaration form because of the fear of the landlords. One of them was Paddakka.She did not submit the declaration form because of the fear of her landlord, Rudre Gowda.

The maternal uncle of Paddakka had got on lease some five acres of land from the father of Rudre Gowda. The land consisted of a thirty-koyil paddy fields with regular water supply (bail), a few paddy fields on a higher plane (majal) and four or five arid (bottu) fields. These fields had been recorded in the tenancy deed of Paddakka.

Rudre Gowda had kept for his personal use two paddy fields, each had an area of seven acres. The fields were a virtual granary for him. From the yield, he met not only his household expenses, but also he sold thirty mudis of rice every year. He was rich. He possessed ancestral properties at Edmer, Kattingeri, and Marnad. He ran a hotel at Poona. His relatives were employed in revenue departments and banks. Paddakka's family worked for the household of Rudre Gowda. He led a princely life.

Paddakka's eldest son was Bhaskar. He completed seventh standard in a school at Marne and then went to Bombay along with one Baccha Suvarna, her neighbour. For about two years he sent letters and sometimes, money and then he stopped. Four years after his elder brother went to Bombay, Sundara followed him. Therefore, Paddakka found it difficult to cultivate her fields. Whatever yield she got was just enough to pay the annual rent of the landlord.

Sundara worked for eight to ten years in a paan shop at Bombay. When he was still working at Bombay, the Land Reforms Act was enforced in Tulunad.

He received a letter from his mother informing him that his father was not well. He told this to his brother and both took a bus to the native place. Before they could reach home their father was already dead.

They performed his last rites. Then Bhaskar returned to Bombay with his other younger brother and Sundara decided to stay back.

Sundara filed a petition in the Land Tribunal regarding his mother's land. However Rudre Gowda and the revenue official Thimmappa had already taken possession of the land records of his mother's property. Rudre Gowda filed a petition in the Additional Court at Udupi to lay his claim on the land leased to Paddakka. Since Paddakka was not represented in the court at the time of hearing, his petition was dismissed. Then he contacted the village accountant (seenave) and threatened him not to give the survey numbers of the landholdings of his tenants if they came to ask for.

Sundara was afraid to submit the declaration form because Rudre Gowda had threatened him with death if he did. However he went to the sub-registrar's office and obtained a duplicate copy of the tenancy deed. He got a copy of the survey numbers of the landholdings of his mother from the documents submitted by Rudre Gowda to the Additional Court. Then he filed the declaration form.

The surveyor of the land tribunal came to survey the land. Sundara showed the land records in his possession.

After three years the land tribunal gave the verdict in favour of Paddakka.

After the verdict, Sundara made arrangement to grow the third crop (kolake) in one of his fields. He went to plough the field. Rudre Gowda filed an appeal in the High Court against the order of the land tribunal. The High Court stayed the order of the land tribunal. Sundara showed presence of mind. Before Rudre Gowda's men could come to the field with the stay order, he had ploughed the field and sowed it. Then he filed a writ petition in the High Court against

the stay order.

Sundara was determined to fight the case; but, his brothers did not take any interest in the court case. This pained Sundara.

The honourable High Court directed the land tribunal to examine the case afresh. The turn of events became a matter of prestige for Rudre Gowda. Sundara had all the land records and he had witnesses to support his claim. Rudre Gowda contacted the members of the land tribunal. However all his efforts were in vain and the case was decided in favour of Sundara's mother.

Would Rudre Gowda keep quiet? He started plotting against Sundara. He contacted the president of the village panchayat and through the president he tried to impress upon Sundara to renounce his claim on the land; Sundara did not succumb to the pressure.

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I was working in a bank and I had been transferred to the Kodangala branch. Sundara was my friend. He visited the branch whenever he wanted to get some information about banking. Rudre Gowda thought that I was propping up Sundara. One day he came to the bank and called me out and said,

'Sundara is your friend, isn't he? Don't you feel he should live for many years? If he wants to live let him renounce his claim on the land. Let him not entertain the illusion that by cultivating enmity with us he will survive for long. Please convey this message to him.'

I said,

'Sundara may be my friend; however it is a matter between a landlord and a tenant. Youknow to whom the land belongs;

so does he. The matter will be decided by the land tribunal. If you so desire, I will tell him what you have told me.'

A court might give a judgment; but I realized slowly how difficult it was to implement the court order. If two families are neighbours,the members of the two families have to interact daily; they would be expected to participate in the social functions at each other's household and share good and bad times together. It would be a life of misery if two neighbours fight constantly, especially when one is the landlord and the other is the tenant.

'Sundara, it would be advisable to discuss the matter with the landlord to see whether some solution can be found,' I told Sundara. But Rudre Gowda was not prepared for any discussion.

The front field (baakimaar) of Sundara was a twenty-koyil paddy field; it was one of his most fertile paddy fields. Therefore, Rudre Gowda sent a feeler to Sundara that he would settle the matter if Sundara agreed to part with this field.

'This is my rice-bowl. If I give up this field what is left for me? This is not acceptable,' argued Sundara.

Sundara had the support of the law. He followed the right path. And yet his mother used to scold him.

When the kolake crop was ready for harvesting, Sundara brought farmhands to do the harvesting; Rudre Gowda stopped them.

Sundara had anticipated this. Therefore he had contacted the local legislator (MLA) and the police. When Rudre Gowda prevented the workers from harvesting the crop, police arrived. Sundara got the crop harvested in the presence of the police.

Sundara was in a deep financial crisis. The yield from the kolake crop brought him some relief. He sold the paddy

and hay and got some money.

In the meanwhile an Appellate Tribunal was set up at Udupi. Appeal against the land tribunal was to be heard by the Appellate Tribunal. Rudre Gowda filed an appeal in the Appellate Tribunal.

There was an incident that occurred a week after Rudre Gowda filed a review petition, which gave a new twist to the dispute.

Rudre Gowda had only one child, a daughter, Savitri. She used to go to a typing institute to learn typing. Although she was of a marriageable age, he was not in a hurry to arrange her marriage. Though there were many proposals, he postponed the decision to get her married.

Savitri did not have a mother; therefore she was the doting daughter of her father. He was wanted a son-in-law who would agree to stay with him and take care of his house and property. One of the sons of his younger sister was also interested in Savitri.

One day Sundara took his buffaloes for grazing. Savitri, who had gone to the institute, came by that road. It was alleged that Sundara molested her. The police came immediately, arrested him, and put him behind bars. It was rumoured that police beat him up severely. A criminal case was registered against him. It seemed there were friends of Sundara who witnessed the crime. They came and testified against him. The members of the Farmers Association left him high and dry.

Sundara was crestfallen. His motivation to fight the case dissipated. Further it was rumoured that Rudre Gowda performed black magic on the household of Sundara. This was revealed by Paddakka and she was totally disturbed. She cursed her son and blamed him for all the trouble.

Sundara was released from the police custody after recording his statement. After his release, he became

incommunicable and did not come out of his house.

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At sunset I reached Kodangala. Sundara was in the cowshed providing feed to the buffaloes. I went to the veranda of the house andhe saw me; but did not utter a single word. He went out and sat on the outer veranda.

When Paddakka saw me, her mood was slightly lightened up. She said,

'Look my son; we were emotionally drained by our fight with the landlord. When were so depressed by the land dispute, this fellow committed an unpardonable crime. Why should he touch that shameless (kadsale) woman? Does he not have sisters? If I speak to him he tells me to shut up. Would God approve of what he has done?'

Sundara stared at his mother. She said to me, 'You see what he is doing.' She went inside the house and I went out to talk to Sundara.

'Sundara, is it true that you had misbehaved with Savitri?'

He sighed and got up. 'Let us go to the plantation and I will tell you everything,' he said.

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'I was grazing the buffaloes. Savitri came to me and said,

"Sundara, a thorn has pricked me; will you please pull it out?"'

'She came and sat near me. We had played together when we were children and we used to talk to each other.'

'Of course I know that,' I said

'Even after the court case, she has been talking to me as usual whatever may be the behaviour of other members

of her family.'

'I told her, "Let me see."'

'When I just touched her foot, she screamed loudly.'

'The moment she screamed two workers, Sheena and Kutti, of the landlord materialized suddenly from the bushes. Perhaps they were hiding there. They held me by the arm and beat me up. They complained to the landlord that I dragged Savitri. I did not do anything to Savitri. Nobody was prepared to listen to me. I was beaten up not only by the servant of the landlord, but also by the policemen. Let death be upon these people. I am really tired of the court case, the land dispute, paddy cultivation, and so on. My brothers are least bothered of the happenings here. Therefore, why should I fight this battle alone? I am the victim of the fraud committed by this wicked girl. Everybody believes her story.
'

'This is a treachery. It is the plot hatched by Rame Gowda against me; I am quite sure about it. The case against me could be contested successfully in the courts. Because of the false allegation I would not be able to lead a normal life,' said Sundara with anguish and anger.

Who will stand shoulder to shoulder with the persons when they face crises in life? Who will instil confidence in them when they face defeat and rejection? When poor persons try to come up in life, the society does everything to supress them. The conscience of the society needs to be aroused. However when will it happen? When will the society come forward to stand up to the poor in the hour of crisis?

Original title: Okkel

(Published in the quarterly magazine, Tuluvere Tudar, in 1988)

Note by the translator: The aforesaid story first appeared in the Kannada collection of short stories, Mattilugalu (1991)of Muddu Moodubelle with the title Baduka Bayasidavaru. The same story was translated into Tulu with the title Okkel and published in the quarterly periodical Tuluvere Tudar in 1994 and then it was included in Osayo (1994) and Osayo (2014). The Tulu version was translated into Kannada and included as one of the stories in a Kannada text book prescribed for F. Y. B. A. of Gulberga University in 2012.

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# THE ANGUISH OF A STAMMERER

There is a big rainbow in the southern sky. Patches of clouds are floating behind the rainbow. How beautiful is the rainbow! It appears like a bow, remains in the sky for a while, and then disappears.

Harsha wants to enjoy the beauty of the rainbow. He climbs the hillock located close to his house. There is a large rock on the top of the hillock. He walks slowly on the edge of the rock. On the northern side of the rock, there is a seat-like formation. Down below the hillock, you can see paddy fields plantations, a forest, and a river. He enjoys the enchanting view of the valley and the bewitching scene in the sky: Clouds playing hide and seek, and the golden rays of the sun. He seems never satisfied savouring the beauty of the nature. Close to the rock, there is a ranje tree and near to the tree, there is a tree of violet berries (kuntala), which is slightly bent. He sits on the seat, and draws pictures.

As he enjoys the beauty of the nature he broods over his problem. And he is deeply hurt. He stutters when he tries to speak.

How did I get the problem? I become tongue-tied whenever I try to speak. I take a lot of time to produce the first syllable, he says to himself

Others do not understand his problem. Therefore they make fun of him. His father is the village patel and he is rarely at home. His mother remains busy in cooking and doing household chores. He has two elder brothers; they had stopped going to school long ago. They remain busy in farming. They talk to each other, discuss various things, and at times laugh together. But they rarely interact with him.

He feels like crying when he sees the behaviour of his

elder brothers. Sometimes his mother utters harsh words against him: 'Why did this wretched fellow take birth in my womb?'

Tears flow when his mother uses harsh words. He would go and sit in a corner. When it is time to go to school, he carries the school bag on his shoulder and quietly goes to school.

He is in the eighth standard. In the school children make fun of him. Sometimes even teachers and headmistress join. When his teachers asks him questions he stutters and is unable to reply. They laugh at him. He is very attentive and disciplined in the class. But his teachers are not sensitive to his problem. His classmates do not take him in their group for sports and games. They tease him and push him out of the group. He feels crying at the treatment meted out to him.

He feels lonely, nobody talks to him at home, and he has no companion in the school.

He is good at nature painting. He has won many prizes. However there is no one to whom he could confide or relate himself. He longs for love and affection.

It is mid Peraarde (December / January). The mango trees around the rock have started flowering. Mango flowers attract kuppul birds. Perched on the mango trees, they produce chirping sounds. Cashew plants have started bearing fruits.

As a part of the annual festival of the royal deity of the village, the ceremony of hoisting the emblem of eagle (garuda) on the flag-post of the village temple (kodi eerunu) has already been performed and the ceremony of nailing wooden pegs (koorigunta) prior for the cockfighting competition has taken place. The annual festival of the local church (saantmaari) and the food-offering ritual at the local

shrine of Koti Chennaya (garodi agel) are scheduled to be held soon. Therefore relatives and well-wishers of the resident families of the village have arrived to witness the annual ceremonies and rituals. A family, consisting of parents and their daughter, has arrived from Chandigarh and is staying in the house of Rangajja. Rangajja is the neighbour of Harsha.

Harsha, as usual, has climbed the rock to enjoy the beauty of the nature. After sometimes he starts descending from the hill. As he descends, he plucks some jungle flame flowers (keepula, Ixoracoccinea) and offers them to the local folk deity. There is a shrine of the folk deity on the slope of the hill. Just then he hears somebody calling out for him. He looks around and notices a grown up girl at some distance. She is standing there, smiling. She has large eyes, and is of reddish complexion.

She comes near Harsha and asks,

'What is your name?'

With great difficulty he replies, 'Ha ha ha Harsha'. He feels shy as he tells his name. He is afraid that she might make his fun. When he takes a long time to complete a word or a sentence, listeners generally go away; she appears keen to strike a conversation with him.

His mother has been gathering foliage close by. When she sees the girl, she calls out to her and says,

'Daughter, please come here. There is no point in talking to him; he cannot speak.'

'Aunty, he is...?' she asks and comes near.

'Yes, he is my son, Harsha. He is a good-for-nothing fellow;he cannot speak properly and he stammers.'

In a voice filled with compassion, the girl says,

'Does he? What a pity.'

She is Sushma, the granddaughter of Rangajja. Her

father is a professor. He studied at Calcutta and then moved to Punjab University as a professor of linguistics. He has come to study Tulu culture:Tulu folk literature, possession rituals and fairs of folk deities, buffalo-race, serpent worship, and so on. Sushma is pursuing a postgraduate course in criminology and psychology.

Sushma and her parents reside in Chandigarh and speak Tulu. Though they are not very proficient in Tulu, they interact with people freely.

On the following day of her arrival, Sushma strikes a friendship with Harsha. She likes the village and Harsha likes her. She takes Harsha with her whenever she goes to Tulu functions and festivals. She does not make his fun. She pays attention to whatever he says and tries to understand what he is trying to say. She constantly asks him what, how, and why of things.

When she visits Harsha's house, everybody is happy. She interacts with them with a smiling face. When she tries to unhusk paddy with a pestle, Harsha's elder brothers make fun of her. However she interacts mostly with Harsha and she talks to him most of the time.

During her stay in the village, on Sundays, or whenever Harsha comes back from school early, they go to the rock and enjoy the scenery. While returning they gather and eat berries of jungle flame flower, karnde (Carissacarandas) berries, and gooseberries. On the way she tells stories of her college life, friends, and play activities. She shares with him the photos of her college life. They talk for hours. Harsha listens to her stories with great concentration and interest.

One day they go to witness the festival of a folk deity. The possessed priest-impersonator presents her sandalwood paste and flowers, and blesses her,

'I am presenting you from my bedstead a leaf smeared

with sandalwood paste and a few strands of areca flower. The sandalwood paste is my protective shield for you. I will protect you wherever you go and whatever you do.'

She becomes very happy. The priest impersonator also blesses Harsha.

When they go home she tells Harsha,

'You will be able to speak properly; the folk deity has blessed you.'

Three months have passed since the professor and his family came to the village. The professor has completed his research project. It is time for them to return.

Harsha is disturbed. He feels,

'Who will talk to me with so much concern like her ?

He tells her in a pathetic tone,

'Don't go leaving me alone; you stay here, or take me with you if you are going.'

'I will ask your mother about this. If she agrees, I will take you. But we can't stay here for more days.'

He is little apprehensive,

'Will the mother allow me to go? She might perhaps be happy at the prospect. She might think, "Let this unwanted luggage go from here." However would it be possible for me to stay at an unknown place leaving behind my mother, father, elder brothers, my school, this forest, and this rock?'

Sushma and her parents are leaving to Chandigarh the following evening. At his home a heavy meal of thin fried pancakes and chicken curry (koorrutti) is being cooked for the professor and his family.

How would his mother respond to Sushma's request? This question weighs his mind as he climbs the rock and Sushma following him. He sits on his stone-seat. She comes near him. He gets up.

'Sush...Sush...Sushma,' he struggles to speak.

'Please sit down Harsha,' she holds his hands and

makes him sit.

Dusting the place, she sits near him. Since she has walked in the heat of the evening sun, she is sweating; her complexion has turned slightly reddish and the strands of her hair are flying in the air. She looks beautiful.

'They are not sending you with us Harsha,' she says.

He sits with a blank expression as if he has not understood what she has said. Rainbow appears again.

'What are you thinking Harsha,' she asks, tapping him on his shoulder. 'Don't feel bad. Your mother will take care of you. This is what she has told me. She will take you to a big hospital for treatment. She regrets that because of the pressure of work she has not paid attention to your problem. I will come back to meet you, is it all right?'

The evening sun shines for a while and descends into the ocean, and darkness gradually envelops.

'Let's go,' she tells him.

They get up and start walking.

As they walk he feels asking her, 'Sushma, come back as my sister-in-law and stay with us.' But the words do not come out of his mouth.

The following day Sushma and her parents leave for Chandigarh by train.

Rangajja and Harsha wait for a letter from Sushma; it does not come. After four or five days news appears in the newspapers that a terrorist gang entered a colony at Chandigarh and shot dead some people and an entire family of a professor of Karnataka origin was also killed. Harsha feels as if a hundred rainbows, broken and transformed into fire balls rain on his head.

Original title: Biimaabiru;

(Broadcast on Akashvani in 1986)

Got translated into Kannada, Published in Janavahini Weekly Issue in 1996

# THE DELUGE

Nobody has imagined that such a calamity would befall the village. A rumour spreads that the village will be flooded on the new moon day. Whether it is the rich or the poor, the old or the young, the city dweller or the villager—everybody is afraid. Madanna is one of them.

There is a hilly terrain on the east of the village and a sea, on the west. It is raining incessantly since morning. The village is inundated.

The river, Papanashini flows in the middle of the village. The town, shops, market, panchayat office, bank, government school, college, church, and the hotel Gayatri Bhavan owned by one Ramaraya are on the western side of the river. Paddy fields; coconut, areca, and banana plantations; a shrine (garodi) of Koti Chennaya and the shrine of a local folk deity are on the eastern side.

There is a Tulu saying: Summer starts after Aati (July / August) and the rainy season begins after Maayi (February / March) (aatidd bokka aregala, maayidd bokka mariyala).

Generally it rains in the month of Aati; but, there is no sign of rains yet. Not a drop of rain yet. Farmers are worried. Even in the Punarasa constellation it had not rained much; but in Pushya constellation it has started raining heavily. It has been raining day and night. Papanashini River, which was dry, has started overflowing. Rainwater has entered houses and the entire area appears a sea.

'Manohara is tense and Savitri has not come out of her house,' is the rumour in the village for the last few months.

The house of Madanna is on the eastern side of the river, close to the ferry point. Savitri is his eldest daughter.

He owns a four-koyl paddy field and ten coconut trees. The paddy field is under water. Close to the paddy field there are around hundred houses; all are thatched houses except three: the house of the timber merchant Kariyappa, the house of the building contractor D'Silva, and the house of Subbanna Bhat. Kariyappa's is a storeyed house; D'Silva's, a terraced house; and Subbanna Bhat's house has a giant front door.

The houses in the low lying areas are partially submerged. The residents salvage whatever they can: umbrellas, traditional rainwear (korambu, made from leaves, reeds and creepers), palm umbrellas (tatra), and woollen blankets, and so on. They take shelter in the tin-roofed veranda of Subbanna Bhat's house. His house is on a higher plane. The water level is still rising. About four to five members of the village panchayat are helping people. The chief officer of the taluk(taasildaar) comes in a jeep and goes around supervising the relief work.

Madanna is outside his house, chewing paan and walking in the knee-deep water.

In this commotion, where is Savitri? Is she alive? Has she jumped into the flood waters? Nobody knows.

Manohara is the son of Subbanna Bhat. He is a nice young man. He has fallen in love with Savitri. Madanna has scolded him and his daughter. His scolding, however, has no effect on them. They have argued:

'In modern times, caste is not an important consideration in marriage. Boys and girls of different castes get married. You give us the consent for our marriage and bless us.'

Since they have not listened to his advice, Madanna has stopped advising them thinking that their relationship is perhaps the will of God. But how did Subbanna Bhat react?

After he finished his college education, Manohara was looking out for a job; but he did not get one.

One day he takes Savitri to his father, and tells him,

'Father I want to marry her.'

Subbanna gets very angry, spits at Savitri, insults her, and sends her away. Then he tells his son,

'Henceforth, you are no longer my son.'

The flood waters are rising and everybody is heading towards the veranda of Subbanna Bhat's house. Savitri refuses to move. She tells sternly that she would not step into the veranda of his house. When she is forcefully taken out, she frees herself and disappears. No one knows where she is.

When Manohara hears the disappearance of Savitri, he becomes disoriented. In spite of the incessant rains, continuous lightning and thunder, and a fierce gale, he comes to the ferry point, crosses the river by a canoe, and reaches the western side of the river.

Madanna is worried; he thinks about his past life:

'I have led a life of honour. People of my age—Nandu Setty, Kuppu Poojary, Madtina Bai, Subraya Naik, and Jack Saldana—have left this world very early. My time had not come so far; now it has come;it is perhaps the time to go. I would have accepted the inevitable but for the fact that I have not been able to arrange the marriage of my daughter. I have brought her up with much love and affection. She is not at home; may be she is already gone.'

When Madanna is thus brooding over his past life, Appanna approaches him. Appanna is from Puttur and he is the guest of a neighbour of Madanna. He comes close to Madanna and says,

'Madanna, what are you doing? What kind of behaviour is this?'

Madanna does not reply.

'Don't you think our days are numbered this time?'

Madanna shakes his head and looks up. When he looks up he sees a large number of people in the veranda of Subbanna Bhat.

Chariot festival,holy bath of the deity of the village temple, annual festival of the village garodi,feast of the local church, weekly market, buffalo race, and cockfighting draw large crowds.

However in the present situation, it is not some happy occasion that made people to congregate in large numbers at this place; the fear of drowning has brought them together. They feel very sad and depressed when they remember some of the belongings they have left behind. There is a lot of din as people struggle to reach safer places; but the noise is drowned in the deafening sound of the surging waters.

The area on eastern side of the Papanashini River is inundated. The rain waters have not yet entered the market side. Therefore people have taken shelter in the shop of one Kamath,in the hairsaloon of Sadasiva, in the clinic of the village physician, in the beedi shop of Martapanne, and in the Gayatri Bhavan. They are talking of the flood. The school, college, bank and government offices have been closed.

The branch manager of a bank sits on a bench inside the Gayatri Bhav an and smokes a cigarette. He is a worried man. His branch has advanced loans under different categories: loans against gold, farm loans, and loans to the weaker sections of the village. How to recover the advances is his worry since everything is destroyed by the flood.

Manohara sits on another bench, and is lost in thoughts as if he is not in this world.

Gayatri Bhavan gets a copy of the newspaper published from Manipal. But people get more news by word of mouth.

One Ganesha of the Kambula House, philosophising the danger of the rising waters, intervenes,

'In this era of rising prices, it is difficult to live anyway. Further, the unlawful activities of man have increased to an unimaginable proportion. Therefore God is perhaps angry and has caused the present calamity. Let everything be swallowed by the flood. One day or the other, all of us have to die, isn't? Let us die together.'

Everybody seems to agree. At the same time some of them are deeply concerned about certain happenings in the village. The news of the death of Suresha is one such event. He committed suicide two days ago. He was the son of Chinkra Seergara.

Hariyappa, a well-travelled man, who is sitting on a front bench in the Gayatri Bhavan, butts in,

'Mr. Ganesh, committing suicide has become a fashion nowadays, don't you think so? It has become a fun. It is said that those who commit suicide are made to go through seven cycles of birth and death. Then they are born demons. Don't you think committing suicide is a kind of madness? Once persons die can they get their life back, you tell me? If they take their own life because of some problem or experience some sorrow, would they be there to enjoy happiness that may come later? Whatever skills are required to lead a normal life must be learnt. Modern youths have no patience and they can't wait. Why should a student who has failed in an examination, a girl who is not able to marry a boy of her choice, or a person who is not able to get a job of his liking, commit suicide? Can't he / she appear for the same examination again? Can't she get another boy?

Can't he / she get another job? When a person commits suicide, it is the end of his or her story. It is not that simple, Mr. Ganesh. There is a saying in Tulu: The dead she-buffalo used to give five seers of milk (saiti ermeg aila peer). After a person is dead, he or she is praised sky-high. Therefore people commit suicide to become famous. Do they know that the world forgets them within a few days? If others commit suicide, should we also commit suicide? Why should we cause pains to others taking our own lives? It is not proper, is it?'

Manohar gets up and goes out suddenly. It is raining heavily and a strong wind is blowing. There is a thunderstorm and the lightning strikes with a frightening sound.

There is news that an upstream dam over the Papanashini River has been washed away. As a result a huge quantity of reddish water is gushing out. Two or three villages close to the dam are under water. Trees, besteads, heaps of hay, cattle, and dead bodies come floating in the gushing waters. The shrine of the folk deity of Ranganna, the village temple, the offices, the houses built on five-cent land, thatched houses, the cement storehouse of D'Silva, the piles of wood of the wood merchant Kariyappa—all are swept away in the swirling flood.

The flood waters reach the outer courtyard of Subbanna Bhat's house. The water level continues to rise and the flood waters have entered the inner yard of his house. There is a loud cry. At a short distance from his house, two bodies—one of a man and the other of a woman—surface for a while and then they are carried away by the flood waters. The bodies seem to be bound together by the end of a sari. A woman screams,

'Aren't they the bodies of Savitri and Manohara?'

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Many days have passed since the deluge. Only a few people of the village have survived. They are now busy to make ends meet. Caste or religious differences are no longer relevant to them; they are just bothered about their future and their survival.

Original title: Uuru Murkunduge

Broadcast on Akashvani in 1984

Translators Note: The above story is the Tulu version of a self Kannada storyOndu Uurolagina Kathe included in the collection of Kannada short stories Ooduttiiraa Nanna Kathe (1984) ofMuddu Moodubelle.

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# LAMENTATIONS OF A FATHER

Strong wind is blowing through a small window. He gets up, casts his glance around, and steps out of the house. He takes a deep breath and then breathes out slowly. He is not able to see properly and his vision has grown hazy. There is darkness outside, and darkness within. He is trembling.

He does not know where his walking stick has fallen. He has become very weak. Because of the force of the wind his legs appear bent as if they are some creepers. There is no one to help him to steady himself.

'Why has this world made me so lonely?' he screams in fear. His screams reverberate like a sound bouncing back from the crevices of a cliff.

'Hey Raja, you were my beloved son, once. You were a small boy then—innocent without any knowledge of the ways of the world. You used to call me "Appa" (father) and I used to call you "O my dear son Raja." I used to enjoy calling you by that name; I was happy at that. You would have remained my son if you were to still possess the childlike innocence that you possessed once. But fate has played a cruel joke on me. I had some dreams but the fate had a different plan.'

'I have received your letter in which you had written, "Dear father, my marriage has been fixed; ten days are left for the marriage. As soon as you receive this letter proceed to Bombay." I am quite sure you must have written the letter. You are an educated person. Since you know how to write letters, you must have written mechanically "Dear father"as a formality in your letter. Do you have the courage to address me "Dear father"? For you, I am a beggar. If I come to your marriage what kind of welcome would I get?'

'The tree, which has been ravaged by the heat of the

sun and which is about to wither away, would it stand against the blowing wind? I have spent my entire life in utter poverty. All my energy has been drained by constant pains and depression. Now I do not have the strength to bear the impact of any devastating news.'

'Many years have passed. When I remember the sacrifices I made in bringing you up, my eyes well up in tears. Perhaps you have no idea of the difficulties I faced giving you a decent education. I had no proper clothes to wear and yet I provided you the dress comparable to that of rich children so that you do not feel inferior in front of them. I made sure that you got proper food whereas the other two siblings of yours were to be satisfied with just watery gruel. I ensured that you got enough food.'

'When you got admission to a city school, I met all your expenses and gave you enough pocket money. When you were small, I carried you on my shoulders to the village pandit and got your asthma cured. I made sure that my poverty did not affect you. Your mother passed away at her prime youth. After her death I was your mother and father. Is this the reward that I get for what I have done for you?'

'After you completed your education, I sent you to far off Bombay. Fortunately you got a job and I became very happy. I told people,

"My son has got a job; my difficult days are over and God has been very kind to me."'

'About three years, to meet you, ago I came to Bombay with one Shetty, our neighbour. Do you remember this Raja? As you did not send either money or letters for many years, I was worried. In spite of my ripe old age, I came to Bombay to see my beloved Raja.'

I was happy when I met you after so many years; I embraced you. There were some other persons in your room.

When I hugged you they laughed. They must have asked you who I was. You said something to them in a language which I could not understand then; perhaps it was the language spoken in Bombay. You looked at me with contempt and anger, and asked,

"Why have you come to Bombay? To embarrass me with the appearance of a beggar? With anun shaven face, dishevelled hair, and dirty and torn dress? Who advised you to come here?"'

'Raja, I came to Bombay thinking that you would be glad to see me. However your behaviour caused me intense pain. You did not say a word whether I could stay with you or not. After I returned from Bombay, the Shetty with whom I came to Bombay, told me something shocking. When your friends asked you who I was, you seemed to have told them that I was the domestic help of your household.'

'If I come to your marriage what kind of reception would I get? Why should I come to your marriage? For you I am a dumb and deaf beggar. You have become a big man. How could a beggar be your father? My son had died long ago. I had shed enough tears for him.'

'I am sure you would get somebody to perform your marriage ritual. I will not come to your marriage. You get married or do whatever you wish. I may get my daily gruel here. I do not have more years to live. God who created me should take me away, I pray.'

'Darkness has enveloped everywhere; I am lonely; this darkness is everything for me—my companion, my family.'

Original title : Amme

Published in the Tulu monthly Tuluvere Bandhu in April 1972

Broadcast on Akashvani in 1979

# BLACK MAGIC

'The son of Manjappanna of the upper house (mitta ill) is sick; somebody has made him to ingest a magical substance (marḍ paadunu).'

The rumour has been circulating in the Guddedangadi Village for the last one year.

Chandrashekar rarely visits his native village. When he has come this time he is surprised to hear the news. That somebody could become a victim of a magical substance is news to him. He has not heard such news in his life so far.

Guddedangadi is a small village. If you alight from a bus at Periyadka and walk down a mile by an internal road, you reach the Guddedangadi market. As you cross the market, you reach fertile paddy fields. These fields are called Tabail. On the southern side of the paddy fields, on a higher plane, there are four houses with thatched roofs and one of them belongs to Manjappanna. Sometimes people call his house galage or thuppe house. But thuppe has not been set up in the house since one year. The yield from the paddy fields is not enough for the family and hence he borrows rice on poli from Birmanna. Manjappanna's economic condition has deteriorated.

His youngest son is Rukmaye. He is in a disturbed state of mind for the last one year. Manjappanna has been hoping that his son would be all right soon. In the meanwhile another incident occurs in his household because of which he is totally shattered.

He hears some sound in the cowshed one night. He tells his daughter Malathi to light a kerosene lamp (chimini). They go to the cowshed. What do they see? One of his he-

buffaloes has collapsed and is struggling. They scream loudly. As they go near the animal, it dies.

The scream alerts their immediate neighbours, Mairekke and Subbayanna. The house of Mairekke is to the south of Manjappanna's house, and that of Subbayanna, to the west. They rush to the house of Manjappanna. The houses of Kitta Naik and Domingo Souza are on a lower plane. They wait in their courtyards and pay attention to what is going on in the house of Manjappanna. Manjappanna cries loudly when sees Subbayanna and he is not able to control himself.

'Subbayanna, tell me why these things happen only to me? On the one hand, my son behaves in a strange way; on the other hand, the buffalo, which is the source of my livelihood, dies mysteriously. Does the folk deity I worship in the veranda of my house not aware of what is happening?' he asks.

Subbayanna thinks for a while and says,

'Look here Subbayanna, these happenings may perhaps be the evil designs of somebody, or the influence of some evil spirits (soonkane). You should not waste time. Let us go to an astrologer and ask why these unfortunate events occur in your household. Before that let us keep aside a few coins as a pledge (kaas gettd diipunu). O my child, Malathi, please bring a pot of water and a few coins.'

Malathi rushes to the house, takes out a few coins from a large wooden trunk, and fills water in a pot. She hands over the coins and the pot to Subbayanna. He moves the coins around the head of the dead buffalo and the head of Rukmaye (toratt geppunu), who is sitting motionless at the corner of the house where firewood is kept. Subbayanna offers a short prayer,

'Henceforth, whatever is causing the trouble to the

family of Subbayanna should cease troubling the family. Tomorrow morning we will find out the cause of the unfortunate events and take appropriate actions.'

The following day Manjappanna and Subbayanna bury the buffalo. They wear dhotis (addakuntu) that reach till their knees, and carry towels on their shoulders. They go to an astrologer and place a rupee and a quarter as offering (kaanike). Then Manjappanna says,

'O venerable astrologer, my son is not all right; to find out what is the cause of his problem I took to him to an astrologer. He said that my son had ingested some magical substance. To remove the deleterious effects of the substance, he recommended some herbal preparation. I went to Kodangala and brought the medicine. The medicine did not work; his problem has continued. He appears to be mentally troubled. Just see the misfortune befallen me the day before...'

The astrologer closes his eyes for a while, takes out the cowrie shells, and spreads them in front of him. Then he says,

'The folk deity of your family has been defiled. You need to organize the purification ceremony (sudda); as a part of the ceremony, the sacred pitcher (kalasha) has to be installed. After the purification ceremony you have to organize the festival of the folk deity and make blood offering (aagabooga).'

Accordingly Manjappanna contacts a joyisa (a Brahmin priest well-versed in rituals and occult practices) and fixes an auspicious day for the purification ceremony. The priest arrives and sanctifies the bedstead of the folk deity. Manjappanna contacts a darshana paatri (priest-impersonator) from Shirtadi to perform the possession ritual of the folk deity. The folk deity appears in the person of

priest impersonator. Addressing the chief organizer (perhaps the chief of the village) the folk deity asks,

'O chief organizer (kartule), please find out from the members of the family whether someone from the family was the victim of an unfortunate incident when he or she was in some other rajya (country, province)?'

The chief organizer looks at Manjappanna and he seems to be confused. He replies,

'I don't know; I don't remember of any such incident.'

The folk deity in a threatening voice,

'It happened long ago, many years back. Try to recollect.'

Manjappanna suddenly remembers something. He says,

'Yes, yes; one of the daughters of my maternal uncle went to Koppala for a holy dip and she was accidently drowned there.'

The folk deity thunders,

'O organizer, I am right. I don't trouble the family that has faith in me. She has become an unsatisfied spirit (jakkani); she is without food or water. Therefore she is troubling the family. A stone-slab representing her must be set-up; and along with the folk deity, Raavu, she must receive worship.'

Manjappanna performs tilahoma (symbolic funeral rites) to appease the unsatisfied spirit.

In spite of performing various rituals there is no improvement in the condition of Rukmaye. He is becoming weaker by the day.

Manjappanna is worried. He has grown old; he must have crossed sixty. His wife had died after giving birth to Malathi.

Manjappanna has brought up his three children with a lot of love and affection. His eldest son Shambha went to Bombay at the age of eleven and settled down there. He

used to visit the native place once in a year or once in two years. For the last nine years there is no news of him. Manjappanna has heard that he lives with a woman. Manjappanna is devastated.

Rukmaye is the second son and after him Malathi was born. Both passed SSLC from a high school at Periydka. Rukmaye continued his studies for another two years. When people asked Manjappanna what his son was studying, he would reply proudly,

'He has read twelve books (passed twelfth standard). He is very intelligent. People say that he would get a good job. He would then arrange his sister's marriage. Once her marriage is over I can die peacefully without any worries.'

Rukmaye is at home for the last five years. He did not get a job. There are many youths in the village who are similarly situated.

Rukmaye got good marks in the school and is very helpful to others. But he is unable to find a job. Since he did not get a job, Malathi's marriage could not be arranged.

Manjappanna is very much depressed as he is not in a position to arrange the marriage of his daughter. He blames his son for this and is angry with him. He complains,

'If he is not educated, I would have made him to apply himself to agriculture and we could have earned our living cultivating our land. Youths like him earn hundred rupees a day even plucking coconuts.'

Rukmaye is used to the daily grumblings of his father. He is very much dejected. He is now 25 years. He is frustrated since he has no job and he feels ashamed to meet people. He has stopped talking to people.

Oncehe went to Kunjar for a local festival. After returning from Kunjar, there were dramatic changes in his behaviour— he would not talk to anybody, would not do any work, would

not take food regularly,and would sit for hours at one place and was incommunicative.

With the belief that his problem is because of ingesting the magical substance, attempts are made to induce him to omit so that the substance came out of his system. Propitiation rituals are performed to appease the evil spirits.

When Manjappanna is about to step out of the doorsill of his house early in the morning one day a lizard falls on the middle of his head. He sprinkles some water on his head and goes to his fields. While returning he meets Subbayanna who is trimming the edges of his paddy field. He narrates the incident to him. Subbayanna thinks for a while, goes to his house, drinks water, and puts on a new dress. Manjappanna also goes to his house, and eats tanjana (leftover rice of the previous day). Both go to an astrologer. The astrologer declares that somebody has performed black magic on Manjappanna and the falling of the lizard on Manjappanna is the result of black magic (kirtime doosha). The astrologer adds further,

'Someone performed witchcraft (maata) and placed the things used in the witchcraft on a public road. Unwittingly your son stepped on those things. The problem of your son is because of the influence of witchcraft. I will give a lemon in which I have invested magical properties. Perform the following ritual on a new moon day: Make two cap-like devises (donne) of dry areca spathes, prepare coloured water (ookuli) of lime and turmeric,put cooked rice on a banana leaf(charva), and light a cloth-torch with a long stick(dondi). Wave the rice around the head of your son. And slice the lemon that I have given to you. Then place everything—including the sliced lemon—at a junction where three roads meet. Then your son will be all right.'

Manjappanna performs the ritual, but there is no

improvement in the condition of Rukmaye.

At this juncture Chandrashekar arrives from Bangalore. He is the son of Mairekke, and a friend of Rukmaye. Rukmaye and he were classmates in the elementary school. After completing his elementary education Chandrashekar went to Bangalore and stayed with his maternal uncle. He continued his education. He earned a degree and got a job in a bank. He and Rukmaye exchanged letters. Of late Rukmaye has stopped writing letters. Chandrashekar is worried.

After he arrives in the village, he gets some information on the condition of Rukmaye.

Chandrashekar is aware that people of the village believe in black magic and witchcraft, and they squander their hard-earned money to get relief from the imagined harmful effects of magical practices.

He decides to find out what is wrong with Rukmaye. He comes to his house, takes him into confidence, and both go to a far away hill. He requests him to tell him everything.

Rukmaye keeps quiet for a long time and finally breaks his silence:

'Last year when I went to the Kunjar fair I met Sheela of Paduru.'

'Sheela? Who was your schoolmate?'

'Yes; when I was in PUC (Pre-University Course), she was doing her SSLC. I was good at sports and she was, in studies. Since we met after four years we remained talking to each other for a long time. Sitting on the boundary wall of the temple, we ate fried puffed up rice (kurlari). I did not realize then that our meeting would give rise to so many rumours. Narnappa of our village spread the rumour that Sheela is of a bad character, she is friendly with me, and we enjoy together.'

'Because of the malicious rumour her marriage is not taking place; nobody is prepared to marry her. Her father beats her and scolds her. She is ashamed to meet people. I feel I am responsible for her situation.'

Chandrashekar listens to everything and finally says,

'There is one solution; you marry her.'

Rukmaye, who is looking at the formation of clouds above, is startled. and he replies,

'The people from the cities, like you, don't understand the customs and traditions of the village. Many years ago our community was divided into two groups on account of some dispute. Two groups donot inter marry and inter-dine. I could break the barrier; but I have a sister to get married.'

'At the time of marriage or funeral, raking up controversies over old customs and traditions is quite common in the village. These disputes are handled by caste leaders (gurkaaras). Some of the old-fashioned caste leaders would not allow any change in the prevailing customs and traditions. Educated people like you have migrated to the cities. Some of us who remain here are without support. After I finished my education I told my father that I would stay in the village and look after paddy cultivation. He was adamant; he insisted that I should not stay in the village. He was of the view that farming was not very remunerative and hence I should not be doing paddy cultivation. He felt that I should seek a white collar job in the city since I was educated.'

'I did not get a job. Therefore I have become disgusted with my life.'

After he has poured out his sorrow, he feels relieved and his problems seem to dissolve for a moment.

Chandrashekar is lost in his thoughts again. After sometime he speaks,

'Don't worry; I will extend whatever help I can.'

Rukmaye becomes very alert, and with full concentration, he asks

'What help?' Will you find a suitable boy for Malathi?'

'In that case what about me as a boy for her?'

Rukmaye seems to get a shock.

'Yes Rukmaye,' Chandrashekar continues with a smile, 'not only that, you stay in the village and start a small business. I will find out whether you can get a loan from the bank. I shall be staying here for another fifteen days. Before I go back to Bangalore, I will make some arrangement to settle you in life. I will come back more-or-less at the same time next year. We shall meet Sheela's father and convey our decision to him. We will try to re-establish the social relationship between the two groups of our clan (kuudkatt) that was broken many years ago. Let us inform our decision to Sheela today itself. I will stand behind you at the time of your crisis.'

Rukmaye feels as if his life has become a beautiful rainbow again, and he gets up with a relieved expression on his face.

Original title: Kirtime

Translator's Note: The above story appeared first in the collection of Tulu short stories, Udipu (1987) of Muddu Moodubelle, with the title, Thaarkane. The Kannada version of the same story appeared in Sukha Dhvani (2007) with the title, Darshana.

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# GLOSSARY

aalade—a spirit complex in which Bermer, Naaga (serpent spirit), Kshetrapaala, Rakteshvari, and Nandigona receive worship; some of the aalades are called Siri Aalades, where Siri and her family receive worship; each Tuluva household offers worship at a specific aalade; an aalade is regarded the place of origin—muulastana—of the ancestors of a Tuluva family.

addakuntu —a piece of garment, a dhoti, worn by a male in Tulunad that reaches till the knees

agar—a mud or stone wall erected around a property

ajal—Tulu Lexicon defines ajal as, 'Jurisdiction of one's occupation, service in shrines and other ceremonies.' It was a system in which certain families belonging to specific communities were required to render fixed services at the various social and religious functions of the village: Playing music, carrying sacred objects of the folk deity, officiating as priests, holding cloth-torches (jiitige), playing drums, lighting fireworks, impersonating folk deities, and so on. It was a hereditary system. The members rendering services were paid in kind. The head of the village was the head of the ajal. Any violation of the ajal conditions attracted reprimand and sometimes, fine. The system was similar to the Jajmani system.

aashleesha bali—a propitiation ritual performed for the Naaga (serpent) spirit

baakimaar—a large paddy field located in front of a (guttu) house; it is believed that the field possessed magical properties; presently most of these paddy fields are divided into smaller units; very few of them are cultivated.

Baiderlu—twin cultural heroes of Tulunad, Koti, Kujumba Kanja, and Chennaya

bail, majal and bottu—these are the traditional classification of farmland in Tulunad; a bail is located at the lowest level; a majal, at a slightly higher level; and a bottu is basically a dryland. Two or three crops used to be raised in the bail and majal fields; bottu fields depended entirely on rainwater and hence only one crop used to be raised; and the bottu fields were used to grow vegetables.

Balindra or Balendra—was a mythological king; he is believed to be a Tuluva king; he receive worship from his subjects on three days in the month of Bontel (October / November). In Tulunad, Dipavali or Festival of Lightsis celebrated in the honour of king Balinsdra.

bandaara—sacred things of a folk deity: weapons, icons, royal whisk etc.

banta—in the Tuluva spirit worship tradition, most of the folk deities have their assistants, for example, Jumaadi has, Jumaadi Banta; Jarandaya, Jarandaya Banta; and so on. The Banta spirit is not supposed to talk; he is dumb.

boovupaadi—boovu (Shorea talura), a kind of tree found in Tulunad; used for house construction; paadi is a grove

Carrom—an indoor game, popular in India; It is played on a rectangular carrom board; the board has four pockets on four corners of the board; the game is played with counters or pieces: Nine black counters, nine white counters, one red (Queen) counter and one striker.

charva—cooked rice offered to folk deities (Bhutas)

chuurimull—a kind of thorny shrub (Zizyphus ocnophia)

dakke bali—dakke is a small hand-held drum; dakke bali is the festival in honour of the Naaga spirits; originally Panaras, a community similar to Nalkes, used to impersonate the serpent spirits and play the dakke as they danced in a trance around mystic designs depicting serpent spirits; it was a non-Brahmin ritual and now it has taken the

form of Naagamandala.

darshana paatri—there are two types of performers at a koola or neema possession ritual: professional Buuta performers and darshana paatris or priest-impersonators. Professional Buuta impersonators are called by different names: cult dancers, Buuta performers, bardic singers, spirit dancers, and so on; in Tulu, they are called, koola kattunagalu. The professional Buuta performers are: Paravas, Pambadas, Nalkes, and Panaras. The professional Buuta performers paint their faces with orpiment (aradala), draw various designs and features on their faces depending on the folk deity they impersonate, wear a pair of beaded heavy anklets (gaggara), sing the folk song or the ballad of the folk deity to the beat of a small percussion instrument (drum) called, thembere, and exhibit different forms of dance in the course of the possession ritual. No person other than a member of one of these communities is permitted to wear beaded anklets and sing the paaddana at a koola ceremony. The priest-impersonators, on the other hand, do not wear anklets, do not sing paaddanas at the time of the possession ritual, and do not do facial painting. They may impersonate a folk deity on the occasions other than koola / neema ceremonies; they may belong to any caste; generally they belong to the Billava or Poojary caste; however, the members of other castes such as Bunt, Odari, Muggera, Marathi Naik, and so on, may also function as priest-impersonators.

dondi—a torch with a long stick; and a piece of white cloth is tied at one end of the stick and the end is dipped in oil and lighted.

donne—a cap-like devise made from dry areca spathes; it is filled with reddish water, ookuli at the time of making offerings to folk deities.

ennebuulya—an important ritual at the start of a possession ritual; the spirit mediums—priest-impersonators (darshana paatris) and professional Buuta performers (koola kattunagulu)—are offered a little oil and area nuts and betel leaves; the ritual is the symbolic permission to them to impersonate the folk deity / deities at a koola festival.

galage— a large screen made of stripes of reeds called oonte and long rods of areca tree; the screen is used to store paddy of the first crop; it is set up to form a circular structure and the structure is fastened with artistically woven ropes of hay; this kind of granary has completely disappeared in the present day Tulunad.

garod#i—the shrines or temples of Koti Chennaya are called garodis; the term garodi must have come from the word garadi; garadi was a gymnasium imparting training in martial skills and wrestling; since Koti and Chennaya were trained in such gymnasiums, their shrines came to be called garodis.

garodi agel—the food offering ritual in a shrine of Koti Chennaya is a garodi agel; at the agel ceremony cooked riceof the first (kaarti) crop only, along with various vegetable dishes, is served to Koti and Chennaya and other divinities worshipped in the garodi.

gattibaje—a popular dish made from sliced onion, mixed with chilli powder, turmeric powder and groundnut flour; and the mixture is fried in oil

guttu—the residence of the head of the village, or the house of the ruler of the village

Jumaadi—a powerful folk deity worshipped in Tulunad; Jumaadi is supposed to be an androgynous deity—possessing both male and female characteristics; recently the deity has acquired a Sanskrit name, Dhumavathi; Jumaadi is a Tuluva deity and Jumaadi is the appropriate name.

kaas gettd diipunu—a kind of magical practice found in Tulunad; to ward off the problems supposed to have been caused by evil spirits, as a temporary solution, a piece of gold, a coconut, or a few coins etc., are kept aside and a pledge is taken to find out the reason for the present problem by consulting an astrologer.

kambula—buffalo-race; also the field where the buffalo-race is conducted

karmara—a kind of tree found in Tulunad; these trees are used basically as firewood; they are in abundance in Tulunad.

karnde—a thorny (prickly) shrub that produces edible berries (Carissacarandas); berries are also called karnde

kartulu—literally means someone who gets things done; it is a colourful expression used at the festival (koola or neema) of folk deities (buuta or daiva); the possessed Buuta performer or the priest-impersonator addresses the chief organizer of the festival kartu or kartulu; kartu is the mediator between the folk deity and the general public.

katta—a temporary bund set up over a river or a canal to divert water from the stream to the paddy fields

kayisetti or kaisetti—a round or oval wooden trough with a handle

keepula—jungle flame flower (Ixoracoccinea)

kodi eerunu—the ceremony of hoisting the eagle emblem (garuda) from the flag-post of the village temple / shrine of folk deities; the flag-post is decorated with flowers; clusters of tender coconuts, areca nuts and bananas

kodiyadi—the ceremonial cloth tied to the ceiling of the pandal at a religious function

kolake—in the traditional Tulunad, farmers used to grow three paddy crops in a Tulu year: kaarti, suggi, and kolake.The crop grown in the monsoon is kaarti; in the winter, the suggi;

and in the summer, kolake. Once upon a time people of Tulunad depended entirely on agriculture. Now agriculture is neglected and many fertile paddy fields have fallen fallow.

kontu—a furrow-like contrivance made of light wood or split trunk of palm trees to lift water for irrigation

koola—the possession ritual performed by the professional cult-dancers or Buuta performers; the people of the Tulu-speaking areas of Karnataka and Kerala worship many local divinities, (buutas and daivas); the koola festival is an elaborate festival of these folk deities; koola and neema are regarded as similar religious ceremonies.

koorigunta—koori literally means,chicken and gunta, wooden peg; in most of the festival of the folk deities of the Tuluvas, as a part of the festival, there is a cockfighting competition; koorigunta ceremony is an initial ceremony prior to the festival; wooden pegs are nailed to the field attached to the shrine of the folk deity; the cocks brought for the competition are tied to the pegs with the help of special strings.

koorrutti—koori is chicken; rotti is wafer-thin pancake made from rice; koorrutti is a delicacy of Tulunad; pieces of pancakes soaked in chicken curry are served; serving koorutti is regarded the highest form of hospitality extended to a guest.

korambu—a traditional rainwear used in Tulunad; it is made from dry leaves and reeds

koyil—an area of land which one farmhand can complete the harvesting of the paddy crop grown in the field during the course of the day

kuudkatt—the residents of a certain geographical area within a village constitute a kuudkatt and the members of the kuudkatt are expected to participate in the various festivals and fairs of the village folk deities

kuntala tree—the tree bearing violet berries (Gomphia angustifolia)

kutteri—a kind of basket used as a cover to keep a flock of fowls (chickens)

lacchil—a small piece of grassland with a few trees and shrubs, andenclosed by a fence

mard paadunu—mard is a herbal preparation; paadunu is making a person to consume it without his or her knowledge; mard paadunu is a magical practice and nobody knows for sure whether such a preparation has indeed been fed to the victim; but, mere suspicion may have devastating psychological consequences on the person, and his / her relatives who believe in this form of occult practice.

matti—a kind of tree(Terminalia tomentosa)

mudi—a traditional measurement of grains prevalent in Tulunad; one mudi is 42 seers or 39 kg; the term also refers to an oval shaped bundle of grains—paddy, rice, or other grains—artistically packed in hay and hay ropes

mula—a cubit; a measure from the elbow to the tip of the finger; one mula is about seventeen inches

mundukuntu—a sheet of cloth measuring about four cubit worn by men in Tulunad

neema—a festival of folk deities; the festival of royal folk deities (raajandaivas) and deified human beings is often called neema; however, there is no much difference between a koola and a neema.

nellikaayi—Indian gooseberry (Philanthus emblica)

ookuli—reddish water prepared dissolving turmeric and lime in water; the reddish water is used in the offerings of folk deities; it symbolizes blood.

osayo—spirit possession

paan—consists of betel leaves, betel (areca) nut pieces, a little of lime, and pieces of tobacco; lime is applied to the

betel leaves and all the ingredients are chewed together

pandit—a practitioner of native medicine or folk medicine

pane—a traditional water-lifting device used in Tulunad to lift water to irrigate fields

paniyaara—the sweet dish and other food items offered to deities

parba—the Tulu word parba means a festival; however in Tulunad, parba is used generally to refer to Dipavali or the Festival of Lights. The farming communities of Tulunad celebrate the festival for three days.

patel—a village revenue collector appointed during the British rule; the patel system was continued for a few years even after independence; it was a hereditary position; and it has since been abolished.

patrodde—a delicious dish of Tulunad; the dish is made from the chopped leaves of yam (teevu) plant and mixed with rice dough.

Peraarde—the name of a Tulu month (December / January)

poli—a system prevalent in Tulunad where a person borrowed food grains—generally rice—during the lean season i.e., rainy season, and paid back the quantity borrowed with interest; for a mudi of rice borrowed the interest (poli) could be half a mudi of rice; the quantity borrowed and the interest was paid back after harvesting the first (monsoon) crop.

posabaara tambila—is a special tambila ritual found in some parts of Tulunad; it is a kind of food offering ritual; the offering is made to the folk deities. The month following Diwali is called the Kodi month; posabaara tambila takes place in the Kodi month.

raajan daiva—Tuluvas worship different local deities

called buutas or daivas; some of them are called raajandaivas or royal deities, for example, Jaarandaaya, Kodamanttaaya, and so on.

Raavu—a ferocious folk deity worshipped in Tulunad

ranje tree—West Indian mograh, Mimusops elengi

saantmaari—annual festival / feast of a church (festival of Saint Mary)

saiti ermeg aila peer—exaggerating the worth of something which is not there now.

Sankraandi—the end of a Tulu month and the beginning of the next month

Sona—the name of a Tulu month, (August / September)

Suggi natti—Suggi is the name of the second crop raised in Tulunad; natti is transplantation of paddy seedlings; Suggi is also the name of a Tulu month (March / April); but Suggi natti and Suggi month have no connection; suggi cultivation takes places during October and November months.

suttige—an initial ritual in which on a front section of a banana leaf,a coconut shorn of its outer skin is placed on a pile of rice

tambila—'a kind of service offered to Bhuta and Naga deities by offering food in front of the deity or before a swastika of rice and coconut.' (Tulu Nigantu, vol. 4). Tambila is a general term used to describe the periodic offerings made to the folk deities and Naga deities. For Naga deities only vegetarian dishes are offered. For some folk deities, blood offering is made. Agel is also a food-offering ritual; however, agel is an offering to the spirits of the dead human beings; in some garodis, Koti Chennaya receive the agel offering.

thuppe—a kind of artistic granary used to store paddy; big landlords used to set up thuppe; setting up of thuppe was the indicator of wealth of the landlord; a circular

structure was raised using hay and hay ropes, and paddy was deposited in the structure. After the granary was filled with paddy, a cone shaped roof-like canopy was set up with hay and hay ropes on the top of the circular structure; presently thuppes have disappeared from Tulunad.

toratt geppunu—a magical practice found in Tulunad; a platter filled with gruel water (theli) and some pieces of charcoal is waved around the head of a human being to ward off or remove effects of evil spirit or evil eye.

uraal—when a ploughman or a cart-driver drives his draught animals, he may produce a high-pitched rhythmic repetitive sound; and it is called uraal in Tulu.

yakshagana—spirit worship, serpent worship and yakshagana are three important cultural elements of Tulunad; yakshagana is a form of folk theatre; yakshagana shows used to be staged in open (paddy) fields.

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